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HOLY SCRIPTURE

THE

ULTIMATE RULE OF FAITH.

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HOLY SCRIPTURE
THE
ULTIMATE RULE OF FAITH
TO A
CHRISTIAN MAN.

BY THE REV. W. FITZGERALD, B.A.,
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.



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ULTIMATE RULE OF FAITH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE only *ultimate reason* for believing any *article of faith*, which a Christian can consistently rely upon, is this—that it was delivered, as *part of the gospel*, by Christ and his Apostles: and the *firmness* of his faith, in any such article, should be *in proportion* to the fulness of the *evidence* by which the matter of fact, of its *apostolic* delivery, is *attested* to him. It is evident, therefore, that *every medium* of proof which is, in its nature, capable of raising a considerable *probability*, that any doctrine or pre-

cept was taught or enjoined by the *founders* of our religion, is—so far—capable of becoming a *motive of faith*; and that all others are irrelevant to the matter.

It seems plain, also, that every man is bound to seek the *best* evidence within his reach for the *apostolic origin* of the doctrines which form his creed. No one, I suppose, imagines that, at least in ordinary cases, the absolute or *objective* truth of our opinions, is an adequate justification of us, in holding and spreading them. It is confessed by all reasonable men, that we are responsible for the conduct of our *understanding* as well as for the government of any other part of our constitution; and that the several degrees of *evidence* form the *standard* according to which we are bound to regulate our *belief*. So that it is not because what we believe *happens* to be *true*, that we are doing our duty in believing it; but the obligation which lies upon every man is to *ascertain*, to the best of his ability, what is true, and to assent or dissent, according to the *apparent* evidence.

It is not meant, by this, that we should absolutely *suspend* our judgment altogether, until we have thoroughly examined *every thing* that

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may be connected with the doctrine, the truth of which we are investigating ; nor is the duty of investigation limited to cases in which *doubts* have been *forced* upon our minds. In religious matters, so long as, in the state of our knowledge at any given period, the reasons *in favour* of an opinion predominate over the reasons that we can estimate *against* it, or so long as we see *some reason* for it and *none* against it, so long we seem bound to hold and act upon that opinion. But though this appears clearly to be our duty in such a state of knowledge ; we may, nevertheless, be conscious, all the while, that such a state of knowledge results from an *imperfect* and limited acquaintance with the matters in question ; and that the proofs upon which our present judgment is grounded (though possessing the nature of rational evidence) are such as have frequently, in particular cases, been found to be *fallacious*. Such a consciousness is, to be sure, no ground for suspending the credit we allow to those proofs, until we see something capable of *overbalancing* their weight ; but it is a good ground for endeavouring so to *extend* and enlarge our knowledge as to put us in a capacity of *judging* whether any thing can be *reasonably* alleged, in this case, against their

conclusiveness ; or whether they may not be *confirmed* by the addition of arguments of a less vague and ambiguous nature.

The Christian religion, and the Mosaic (which is involved in Christianity) seem to be remarkably distinguished from all other professed *revelations*, by this observable character,—that they alone have claimed the credence of mankind upon the foot of evidence in its *nature* capable of producing rational conviction. I do not mean merely that these are the only religions which stand upon the support of good and sufficient evidence,—of evidence that can bear to be thoroughly sifted and examined ; but (much more) that these are the only religions which rest their *whole claim for reception* upon such a *species* of support as can be truly said (and must even be owned by those who *reject* it) to be in the *nature* of rational evidence. The Pagan religions manifestly stood chiefly, if not entirely, upon the foot of the mere *authority* of legislators and priests ; and the Mahomedan religion stands upon such circumstances as the excellence of the Koran and the temporal success of the prophet ; circumstances which, *though ever so well established*, have no real logical capacity of inferring the conclusion that is derived from

them ; whereas Christianity, from the first, was proposed upon the evidence of *facts*, capable of being proved by the ordinary rules which regulate the proof of facts, pretending to be proved in that way, and no other, and which, *if proved*, do really and logically infer the truth of the revelation, which they are alleged to confirm. Nor did Jesus Christ and his apostles ever require men to *believe* their gospel upon any other ground whatever but the ground of these facts, and upon the supposition that the *truth* of these facts could be *rationally* made out to their satisfaction.

Those, therefore, who are dissatisfied with men for seeking earnestly after a substantial *reason of the hope that is in them*, are in reality dissatisfied with the Christian religion ; and those who would build men's faith upon the foundation of *authority*, or such slight presumptions as many *false* religions have in common with the Christian, are placing the gospel upon another basis from that upon which our *Saviour* himself has settled it. Christianity was the great disturber of the peace of the world, which put an end to the tranquil influence of custom, authority, credulity, sentiment and imagination, and forced men upon the dis-

agreeable work of examining evidence, searching records, and *proving all things*, in order that they might be enabled to *hold fast that only which is good*.

It is evident that, in the way of *reasoning*, the authority of *our* magistrates and clergy is of no more *real weight* than the authority of magistrates and clergy of *any other* country ; and he who, professing to seek for *truth*, supposes that the authority of magistrates and clergy is his best guide in the search, has no excuse for preferring the sentence of his own superiors, before the sentence of the *great majority* of magistrates and clergy throughout the world.

Some of the maxims of civil government and human jurisprudence are very much perverted when they are applied to the church of Christ. In this latter, *there is but one Lawgiver, who is able both to kill and to make alive* ; neither can it be proved that he has commissioned any human delegates so to expound his laws as that their expositions shall be authoritatively binding upon the consciences of his subjects. Human judicatures do not pretend to control the judgments of men ; nor it is a *crime* in any one to think a law *unwise*, or a sentence *erroneous* ;

but men's *political conduct* alone is regulated by their decisions, although *really erroneous*, because settled rules and uniform practice are of more consequence to the state than the attainment of *abstract truth* in such temporal matters as come under their cognizance. For the same reason, they prudently assign great weight to presumptions arising out of *custom* and *long possession*, and refuse to hear any evidence which is adverse to such presumptions; not because they look upon such presumptions as absolutely the *best evidence*, but for the sake of avoiding many temporal inconveniences inconsistent with the good order of the commonwealth. Such rules and methods of proceeding, the supreme legislative power, in every state, which is itself the fountain of all civil law, ratifies by its sanction or tolerance.

The exposition of the law of Jesus Christ is far otherwise circumstanced; nor can the same absolute submission to their judgments be reasonably claimed by church-governors, except on one or other of these pretences—i.e., either that Christ has absolutely secured them *from error* in the exposition of his laws, or that temporal *peace* and *uniformity* are of more consequence than TRUTH in the church of God. The

latter of these theories was never held by any Christian; the former has been propounded, under various *modifications*, by many. But, until it can be shewn *what* particular organ or function of church government possesses an *infallible* direction; (for all grant that some organs and functions of church government possess it not) and *why* this, rather than the others; or why, since the promises of *guidance into truth* are not a whit more *absolute* than the promises of *guidance into holiness*, they are not to be interpreted with the same *conditions* of a use of the proper means, and a meek submission to the guiding spirit; or why, since they are made indifferently to both, they should be limited to church-governors, to the exclusion of other *members* of the church; until these questions can be satisfactorily answered, I think the theory will find little favour with reflecting men.

Those, therefore, who dissent from the expositions of the laws of Jesus Christ, which are propounded by their ecclesiastical superiors, are by no means guilty of the same rebellious conduct as those citizens who should refuse to acquiesce in the expositions of the civil law propounded by the judges of the land: but (if a parallel must be found) they are in the case

of those who refuse to take the civil judges' exposition of those *fundamental laws* of the constitution which, constituting the terms of that compact between the governors and the governed, in virtue of which the magistrate exercises his functions, the magistrate has no authority absolutely to expound, so as finally to conclude the subject; or in the case of those who refuse to obey a *human law*, because they deem it inconsistent with the *divine*.

The surrender of our *private judgment*, upon any important *religious* question, seems to involve, as the grounds of such a proceeding, two persuasions;—a persuasion of our own *incompetency*, after our best exertions, to determine the question proposed; and a persuasion of the perfect *competency* and *qualifications* of the person to whose guidance we submit our understandings. In *temporal* matters the conditions are not necessarily so strict; because there are many things which we are perfectly *competent* to understand, which, nevertheless, we need not (and, indeed, could not, consistently with our other occupations) investigate very carefully; and, without having *perfect* confidence in the competence and qualifications of our guides, it may often be wise to *act* according

to their advice, as being the best which circumstances place conveniently within our reach. But, in religious matters, it seems plain that these two conditions require to be strictly fulfilled. The *first* of these conditions cannot honestly be fulfilled but after a careful review, to the best of a man's ability, of the question to be decided, and the *nature* of the matters involved in it. To afford the materials for such a review, is the object of the following pages: the *second*, seems to require a similar examination of the qualifications of our guides, as compared with the question in which we seek their assistance. Now, when one considers the vast number of guides, all making great pretensions, and seeming to have great claims, to *competency*; and the vast differences between them upon points of the highest importance; and the nature of the subjects which must be examined, in order to decide *reasonably* between their contending claims; he will, perhaps, be apt to judge this at least as difficult a question in religion as most others; and to come to the conclusion that it is safest to *suspend* the judgment altogether, where he cannot clearly see with his own eyes what is the true meaning and intention of the laws of Jesus Christ. Cer-

tainly nothing can justify us in determining our choice of guides by the *accidents* of birth, language, taste, consanguinity, or civil authority. The act, by which we resolve to submit our understandings to some guide in general; and the act by which, out of the multiplicity of *possible* guides, we determine our implicit submission to some one guide in particular,—these are both undoubted exercises of the *private judgment*; and to such exercises all the dangers and difficulties attach which can be supposed to attach to any other exercise of the same function. It is undoubtedly an *easy* gospel which commands us to submit implicitly to the guides which are next at hand; but it is not Christ's gospel. Men will readily practise in religion an uninquiring acquiescence which they would own to be madness even in their temporal concerns. The ruin of mens' fortunes comes on before the eyes of the world: it brings present uneasiness, disgrace, and affliction. But the ruin of the soul is hidden from us by an impenetrable darkness. The abyss, into which the blind and their leaders are continually dropping, reveals not the secrets of its unfathomable depths. These *graves* are *outwardly beautiful*, and disclose nothing of the corruption and rottenness within. For my

part, I remember who has said—PROVE ALL THINGS. I know that *vain conversation*, as well as orthodox belief, may be *received by tradition from our Fathers*; and I know none from whom truth can be *inherited*, but Him who has written his legacy in the Word of Truth. My *right to try the spirits* springs, I believe, from my *duty* to try them; and both from the will of him who, when he made reason the guide of my actions, left me self-condemned should I avoid to use it. My duty may be difficult,—it may be dangerous: but it were far more dangerous to shrink from the task which Almighty God has set me to perform. If I indeed love the *truth*, I must love it *as truth*; and, therefore, do my utmost to ascertain, by the best evidence within my reach, that what I hold as true is really true; remembering always that it is not *simple error*, but *wilful and dishonest error* which he will punish as a *crime*. It is in no spirit of proud independence that I refuse to yield implicit faith, or to sit down content with lower evidence when higher is within my reach. It is because I dare not do it: for those who speak with authority in the Church's name, and bid us receive her witness at our peril as the message of her Lord, and *shake off the dust of their feet against us*—

if we hesitate at jot or tittle, we pray them to think well what they are doing. There is a woe for them by whom offences come: the causeless curse shall return to him who uttered it. Let them be well assured of their commission, lest they be found at last amongst those who preach *Thus saith the Lord*, when he *hath not spoken*. He has left his will to us in the *lively oracles*. If they speak not so plainly, or so often as we would have them, let us beware how we seek to forbidden arts, and call up the dead saints of Israel to explain secrets which he has not explained. We may be impatient at differences of opinion, at schisms, at heresies, and dissensions; but let us take heed that the *unity* which we substitute is indeed *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*. The ark may seem to totter, but let none prop it with an arm of flesh. The day of true union is at hand: we shall all soon stand before our common Master. Let the distractions and disputes of states and churches stir up our prayers, *like the sound of many waters about his throne*, that he may hasten on that blessed day, and give us rest in that mysterious unity, when the members shall be one with Him even as He is one with God.

AMHN. NAI. EPXOT. KTIIE. IHEOT.

I.

THE writings called the New Testament, profess, upon the face of them, to contain *the very words*, in which the first preachers of the gospel, who were immediately appointed by our Lord himself to instruct the world in *the means of salvation*, thought fit to narrate his life, actions, and discourses, together with the principal occurrences which took place in the founding of the church; and to publish, expound, and defend the doctrines of Christianity upon several remarkable occasions.

The genuineness and authenticity of these writings is ascertained to us by the same *kind* of medium of proof, as that by which the genuineness and authenticity of other ancient writings is established; and this *kind* of proof may be had, in the case of the New Testament, in *a higher degree* of evidence, than it can be had in the case of any other document of equal antiquity.

It would seem reasonable, therefore, that whosoever desired to determine what the doctrines were which Christ and his apostles preached, should assign the *highest* value to these writings, and rank them as *the best* evidence, within his reach, for judging of the original character of the Christian religion. Consequently, where the meaning of these writings is *clear* and *explicit*, they must be allowed to *control* any other testimony which appears to contradict them; and, *so far as they have common matter*, all other documents of evidence, concerning the apostolic teaching, must be referred to these writings, as their test and standard. For all who are in the least acquainted with the rules of evidence; *—all *lawyers*, for example, whose profession makes them expert in such matters;—are well aware that the attestation of a *written* document is, in its nature, more certain than the attestation of *oral* speeches; and that the attestation of

* Cicero, in his declaiming pro Archia poeta, gives a handsome turn in favour of the unwritten evidence.....but the balance of probability is certainly on the other side; for the testimony of an honest man, however fortified with the solemnities of an oath, is yet liable to the imperfections of memory; and as the remembrance of things fail and go off, men are apt to entertain opinions in their stead.—Gilbert's *Law of Evidence*, pp. 4, 5.

definite words is more certain than the mere attestation of the witnesses' *belief* of their general *import*. So that, even if a matter of universal *oral* tradition connected itself, by *direct testimony*, with the apostles, it would fall under the general condition of documents external to scripture, and be controllable by the tenor of the apostolic *writings*. Much more, therefore, are we bound to try by this touchstone such traditive doctrines or practices as do not connect themselves, *by direct testimony*, with the apostles; but which are connected with them by *a process of reasoning*, founded only on probable *presumptions*. As for instance, where the *direct testimony* only reaches so far as to prove that certain opinions were generally held in the age *succeeding* the apostolic; and it is thence *inferred*, without direct testimony on the part of the persons holding such opinions, that they were grounded upon the oral teaching of the apostles.

These considerations, however, by no means go the length of proving that the writings of the New Testament contain the whole of that gospel, faith in which is *necessary* and (so far as faith is required) *adequate* to salvation. Let us now advance a step farther. If we examine

the writings of the New Testament, we shall find it clearly laid down in them, that a certain system of doctrines, called 'the gospel,' was promulgated by the apostles; the belief in which they required as necessary and adequate to salvation; that this condition of salvation was not of a temporary or local nature, but was affirmed by them to extend to *all* times and places; and that they distinctly promised and foretold that a society of men, believing in this gospel, should subsist to the end of the world; * and consequently that a knowledge of these essential doctrines should be perpetually maintained in the world, until the time when *Christ should deliver up the kingdom to the Father*, and the present dispensation be completed. Though it be very true, therefore, that we could not reasonably infer from the mere fact of God's having made a *particular* revelation, at a *particular* time, to *particular* persons, that, consequently, he must have designed to secure to that revelation such a mode of continued promulgation as should preserve it entire and un-mutilated at *all* times and for *all* persons; †

* Matt. xxviii. 20, where see *Grotius* upon the place.

† We are not in any sort able to judge [i.e. before we know *God's purpose* in the Revelation,] whether it were to have been

though, I say, this be very true, and very proper to be urged upon several important occasions, yet it seems to have little or no pertinence to the present question. In the present case, we are distinctly informed that it *was* God's intention that the gospel should be preserved, and transmitted in safety to the very latest generations of mankind; and, from this information, a strong presumption seems to arise, that he did not entrust *any essential part* of it to such a mode of conveyance—*oral tradition*, for example—as experience has shewn to be, in its nature, infinitely precarious and uncertain. This presumption is farther confirmed when we find that God has, in fact, made use of the *more certain* medium of *written* documents in the transmission of the gospel; because his making use of *this* medium seems a plain recognition of the defectiveness and insufficiency of the others: and, when we farther reflect, that the original authors of these written documents, though they reported nothing but what they had themselves

expected, that the Revelation should have been committed to *writing*, or left to be handed down, and *CONSEQUENTLY corrupted*, by verbal tradition, and at length *sunk under it*, if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will.—*Bp. Butler's Analogy*, part ii. chap. iii.

either *heard* or *seen* or been *fully instructed* in by infallible authority, were, nevertheless, not left to themselves in the performance of their work, but aided in it by the special suggestion or superintendence of the Holy Spirit, the additional safeguard thus carefully provided for securing the integrity of the gospel, will still farther strengthen the presumption against supposing, that part of that gospel was left to be transmitted by a series of *unauthorized, remote, and fallible* witnesses. Farther still, if we consider that the writers of the New Testament had a pregnant instance before them (in the case of the *synagogue*) of the abuses to which oral tradition is liable, and that one of the heaviest charges, which Christ and his apostles brought against the Jewish teachers, was, that they had superadded oral traditions (pretending a *divine* original,* but in reality *human*) to the perfect rule of the *written law*, we shall gain an additional corroboration of the same presumption: and, since the *written word* of the Old Testament was designed by God to be the *per-*

* Maimonidis porta Mosis, ed. Pocock, p. 5. See a list of the *Succession* of Doctors, through whom the *oral law* was propagated, from *Moses* down to R. *Simeon*, in Jos. de Voisin's *Notes* upon Raymund Martin's *Pugio Fidei*, p. 9; and an account of the *corruptions* of the oral law, *ibid.* p. 24.

fect rule of faith to the Jewish church, there seems reason to presume, from analogy, that the *written word* of the New Testament was, in a similar way, designed to be the *perfect rule* of the Christian church; especially if we consider that the Christian church lacked, in many important respects, those advantages for transmitting a tradition purely, in its earlier times, which the Jewish church possessed; such as the long continuance of a theocracy,—visible interferences of the Almighty,—a permanent succession of inspired prophets to rectify growing errors,—and the absence of doctrinal heresies. Besides, if we examine the writings of the New Testament themselves, we shall find in them distinct intimations that the authors of them were fully aware of the imperfections of *oral tradition*, and *wrote*, in some cases at least, for the special purpose of guarding against those imperfections. Thus, for example, St. Luke tells Theophilus that he had *written* his gospel in order that he might have the means of knowing the *certainty* of those things in which he had been orally instructed. (Luke i. 4.) St. John, towards the end of his gospel, (xxi. 23) takes notice of, and *corrects*, a false oral tradition which had gone abroad among the bre-

thren, that Christ had said the apostle himself should never die.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. v. 11), *corrects*, in like manner, an oral tradition of his preaching circumcision, which had gained credit even amongst those who had seen and heard him, and were converted by his means.

His second Epistle to the Thessalonians, also, is written to correct the mistakes which the church had fallen into, respecting what he had taught them concerning the man of sin—i. e. to *correct a false oral tradition* of the meaning of his doctrine.

St. Peter too (2 Pet. i. 13) tells us, that one of his designs, in writing a summary of his doctrine to the church, was that, *after his decease*, they might have these things constantly in remembrance.

Indeed it is evident, from the whole tenor of the apostolic epistles, that the churches, even in the lifetime of the apostles, were full of men, whose great object was to misrepresent and adulterate wilfully the doctrine of Christ; and that the churches themselves were, through unskilfulness and simplicity and negligence, frequently led into mistakes and misapprehen-

sions of the true nature of that doctrine ; and that the apostles wrote for the purpose of supplying a *lasting* and *authentic* safeguard against these impositions and errors. These considerations, therefore, tend also to confirm our antecedent presumption.

Nor is it any reasonable objection to this view of the matter, that there are, in the *New Testament* itself, many injunctions to adhere to the apostles teaching *orally* received,* and to transmit that teaching to other generations : because such injunctions plainly relates to the *matter* of that teaching, not as it is *circumstantiated* by the accidents of being *written* or *unwritten* ; and, though *unwritten* teaching might be a very certain rule in the life-time of the apostles, that does not affect the reasons which tend to shew that it would be a very uncertain rule to after ages ; and, as the equity of these injunctions requires us to *adhere* to, and *transmit*, the apostolic teaching as *certainly* as possible, they are truly obeyed by adhering to, and transmitting, that teaching in the form, which

* 1 Cor. xi. 2, 23, 34 ; 2 Thess. ii. 15 ; 1 Tim. vi. 20 ; 2 Tim. i. 13 ; ii. 1, 2. Yet the *παράκαταθήκη* in the Epistles to Timothy seems to be *rightly* explained by *Theodore*t (in loc.) of the charge given in *those very Epistles*, rather than of any oral teaching.

the apostles themselves judged to be its safest and *most certain* form.

Neither does it seem sufficient to invalidate the correctness of this account of the matter, to allege that the books of the New Testament, having been written *occasionally*, and for the immediate purpose of serving certain *particular* ends, could never have been designed to be a *full* and *perfect rule* of faith and morals for the church in *all ages*. For,

Even though this were universally true (as, in fact, it is *not*) of *all* the books of the New Testament, yet is very conceivable beforehand that the circumstances of the church, in those early times, may have been such as naturally to afford occasions to the apostles, for sufficiently explaining whatever was necessary to be known by the church at any time; and, when those circumstances had occasioned the writing of such a body of documents as was sufficient for that *further* and *greater*, as well as for the *nearer* and *lesser* end; it is not only very conceivable, but most consistent with the general analogy of God's providence, that such a body of documents should be used for that further and greater end, rather than that a *new* body of documents should be compiled for

that especial purpose. Besides, a rule of faith composed, in a great measure, of *occasional* documents, has *this* great advantage over any other; that, from the nature of the case, the documents which form it have many more internal artless characters of authenticity than a formal systematic treatise, compiled without reference to peculiar persons, times, or manners, could possibly contain. In point of fact, the circumstances which occasioned several of the writings of the New Testament were manifestly such as were naturally *fit* to elicit information upon the most important matters in the Christian scheme. For example—*Theophilus* appears to have been a man of a serious and enquiring temper, who was anxious to have, in *writing*, a distinct account of the principal things which were taught and done by Christ and his apostles. Now it is plain that such an account as was fit to satisfy such a person would naturally contain in it the *fundamental doctrines* and *prime evidences* of the Christian revelation. Again, the churches of *Rome* and *Galatia* were distracted by disputes about the nature and grounds of a man's justification before God. It is plain that such circumstances afforded a very natural occasion to St. Paul for

explaining the only true way of obtaining eternal life. These are only given as instances; for it would be tedious and unnecessary to examine the occasions which suggested the writing of *all* the books of the New Testament. It is sufficient to observe that, as the *wants* which drew them forth were not, in their nature (though they might be in their accidental form) temporary and peculiar, but, *substantially*, the common wants of the church in all ages; so the mode in which the apostles endeavoured to satisfy those wants; i.e., by going on large principles and unfolding the *general tenor* of revelation, was essentially fitted to supply a remedy for those wants in other times, as well as in their own.

It should, farther, be observed that many parts of the *Old Testament* are also, as to their immediate object, wholly *occasional*; and that, throughout the Old Testament, mere temporary and local circumstances have been made the occasions of eliciting information concerning matters of *permanent* and *universal* importance. So that the analogy of the two dispensations appears in this, as well as in other points, to favour our general conclusion.

II.

WE find, in the New Testament, an important distinction drawn between *the faith* and *the wisdom* of the Christian religion. The former is that summary of doctrine which was esteemed *necessary* and *adequate* to salvation, and, upon the professed belief of which men were received, by baptism, into full communion with the visible church, and so entered into *the kingdom of heaven*; and this is, in its strict and most proper sense, THE GOSPEL. The latter is a much larger and more scientific body of truth, related to and illustrating the faith, but not essential to it; developed by reasoning, and analogies, and harmonizing doctrines into the consistency of *a system*. This *wisdom* is *perfective* of the Christian, not *essential* to him. It pre-supposes the faith, and is built upon it, as a superstructure upon its foundation; so that the faith, in reference to it, may be properly styled the *fundamental* part of Christian

doctrine. This wisdom is attained by Christians, in greater or less degrees, in proportion to their zeal, diligence, capacity, and other graces. There is no one measure of it *necessary* and *adequate*, as there is of the *gospel*.

St. Paul, for instance, while he tells the Corinthians that he could preach nothing amongst them but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*; (1 Cor. ii. 2.) that he was obliged to treat them as still *carnal*, as *babes* in Christ, who required *milk* and not *strong meat*; (iii. 1, 2.) informs them, at the same time, that he spoke *wisdom* amongst them who were (not *babes*, but) *perfect*; (τέλειοι) and which was only fit for those who were (not *carnal*, but) *spiritual*. (ii. 7, 14.)

In like manner, the author to the Hebrews tells the persons whom he addresses that they had so fallen back from their privileges, as to need to be instructed in *the first principles* of the oracles of God, and to be fed with *milk* and not with *strong meat*; milk being proper to babes, unskilful in the word, and meat to those of full age, (τέλειοι) who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Heb. v. 12—14.) But, conceiving better hopes of them, he adds—“Leaving the *principles of the doctrine of Christ*, let us go on

unto *perfection* ; not laying again *the foundation* of repentance from dead works ; and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." (vi. 1, 2.)

It seems to me that there can be no reasonable ground for doubting that these two passages are *parallel* to each other, in all points pertinent to the present subject, and that *the perfection* of the epistle to the Hebrews corresponds to *the wisdom* of the epistle to the Corinthians. If we judge of the nature of this wisdom from the samples given of it in the remainder of the epistle to the Hebrews, it will appear that a great part of it consisted in the doctrine of *types*, and the developement of the relations between the *old* and the *new* covenant, and the discovery of the harmonious unity of the divine plan, conducted, through imperfect *preparatory* dispensations, to its *completion* in the revelation of Jesus Christ. One is led to the same conclusion by comparing St. Paul's language in the place just cited from his first epistle to the Corinthians, with his language elsewhere. In that place (ii. 7.) he describes this wisdom as the wisdom of God *in a mystery* —the *hidden* wisdom, which God *ordained*

before the world unto the glory of Christians—and which was *revealed* to the apostles by that Spirit which searcheth *the deep things* of God. Now we find expressions in other parts of his writings, so similar to these as to seem to identify the subject *there* spoken of with the subject *here* mentioned, joined with farther and larger explanations of that subject; so as to reflect light upon his meaning in the place immediately before us. Thus, for instance, in the epistle to the Romans, (xvi. 25, 26.) he tells us that the preaching of Jesus Christ was, according to the revelation of *the mystery*, which was *kept secret since the world began*, but is now made manifest, and *by the scriptures of the prophets*, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith. From which words it would appear that one of the means of the revelation of this mystery (or *secret plan* of God) was the unfolding of the sense of the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament. In the epistle to the Ephesians, (i. 8—10.) he tells that church that God hath abounded towards us in all *wisdom* and *prudence*, having made known unto us *the mystery of his will*, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that *in the dispensation of the fulness of times*

(εἰς εἰκονομαίαν τοῦ πληρωματος τῶν καιρῶν) he might *gather together in one head* all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. And again, (iii. 3, 5, 9, 10.) he says that God, by special revelation, had made known to him *the mystery* which, in other ages, was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets *by the Spirit—the mystery* which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things, to the intent that *now*, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church *the manifold wisdom of God* (ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ.) So that this wisdom seems to transcend the belief of the fact of man's redemption by Christ, and to take in a perception of *the reasons* and *relations* of *the scheme* of his redemption, together with its bearings upon that whole dispensation of things which began with the *creation* of the universe, and will terminate with its *renovation*.* An acquaintance with

* Thomas Burnet de fide et officiis, Pref. p. 17. Episcopus in his Respons. ad lxiv. Quæst. q. vii. determines thus. "Id mihi dubium non est, si absolutius illud docendi genus intelligatur, non de iis, quæ ad salutem scitu ac creditu necessaria sunt, sed de iis, quæ ad profundiores rerum necessarias, jam scitarum creditarumque inculcationem et majorem confirmationem utiliâ erant."

this mystery, supernaturally infused, seems to be that *word of wisdom* which St. Paul places first among the *extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost*; (1 Cor. xii. 8.) so that we may perceive that the arguments and reasonings of the apostles, and in particular those drawn from *the Old Testament*, were the fruits of inspiration as well as their statements of doctrine. This conclusion will be farther corroborated, if we consider that it was a special function of the Holy Ghost to bring to the *remembrance* of the apostles the discourses which our Lord had held with them. (John xiv. 26.) Now we know that one great topic of our Lord's discourses, both before and after his resurrection, was the relation of the prophetic scriptures to him and his office. (Luke xxiv. 44; xviii. 21.)

But as it seems to be considered a weighty objection against the validity of these arguments, which the Apostles draw from the *Old Testament*, that they suppose the *logical propriety* of *types* and *secondary senses*, it may be proper to say something upon that matter; especially as the wild and fanciful extravagance of some early writers has been treated as a thing of the same nature with the mystical interpretations of the Old Testament, which

are sanctioned by Christ and his Apostles; in the same way as the *lying wonders* of later times have been connected with the *true miracles* of the gospel history.

There seems to be no peculiar difficulty connected with the notion of actions purely symbolical, or of speeches merely parabolical; i. e. of actions which have no other assignable reason but only to signify something else (such as Pilate's *washing his hands*, when passing sentence upon our Lord;) or of speeches, the *primary sense* of which is merely fictitious (which is the common case of all *moral fables*;) but there *is* peculiar difficulty supposed to be attached to the notion of actions or speeches, having two *real* meanings: and, indeed, it must be admitted that *such* symbolical actions and words would, in their nature, be more obscure than others; because, having already an assignable immediate object, there would be *less* in them to lead the mind to anticipate their *remote signification*, than there would be if their whole import had reference to the remote object. But we must consider that our perception of the meaning of signs arises not merely from the logical propriety with which those signs, considered by themselves, *may* denote particular

things; for that *alone* would leave us exposed to innumerable uncertainties; but, together with this, from our judgment of what, under all the circumstances of the case, it is *likely* that he, who uses them, *intends* them to denote. Now, as the same sign *may* undeniably denote more things than one—and, in the case of allegories, certainly *does* denote more things than one (for the *primary* sense of allegories, though purely fictitious, and only ancillary to another, is yet *a meaning* of the words)—it would seem that giving signs one real primary import, or converting their fictitious primary import into a real one, does not necessarily destroy the logical propriety with which they *may* be used to signify something else, though it may render their signification more obscure: and cases may be easily imagined, or found, in which the very obscurity of such symbols would be a good reason for adopting them. When Tarquin struck down the tall poppies with his staff, this was an action of which an immediate account might be given, without supposing it *symbolical* of any remote object: * and this

* “ Huic nuncio, *quia credo dubiæ fidei videbatur*, nihil voce responsum est. Rex, velut deliberabundus, in hortum ædium transit sequente nuncio filii. Ibi inambulans tacitus summa pa-

very quality of the action was the reason why it was selected as a mode of information, in the particular case. In the same way, where either blame or praise is meant to be covertly insinuated, things or persons,—*real* things or persons—are often so described as that an intelligent reader may easily perceive that the reference is to be carried on to other things and persons, which bear a certain parallel resemblance to those explicitly mentioned; and intimations of such a farther reference may be given, in ways altogether analogous to those in which the real import is made to shine through the veil of allegory. For instance, it may be evident that the thing ultimately referred to would suit the writer's purpose and general drift much better than the thing directly described; * or such a particular selection of the

paverum capita dicitur baculo decussisse.”—Livii. Hist. Dec. i. Lib. i.

* Bayle thus describes *Maimbourg's* method of writing history. “La fortune n'ayant pas secondé les bonnes intentions, qu'il a toujours eues, d'acquérir une glorieuse reputation, ni du côté de la chair, ni du côté de la critique, ni du côté de la controverse, il chercha une autre emploi a son esprit, et s'avisa de devenir, historien. Si les défense de S. M. n'eussent pas été si expressees, il eût volontiers entrepris l'Histoire du Jansénisme, pour décharger son mal-talent. Mais comme c'eût été recommencer une guerre ouverte, il se contenta de faire des courses clandestinement sur les

circumstances of the thing may be made as will lead the mind to search for an ulterior reason for such a particular selection; or expressions may be used, which cannot be made to fit the immediate subject without some degree of force, but which suit exactly the remoter subject; besides many other ways, which it is unnecessary to enumerate particularly. So that, on the whole, it would seem that there is nothing arbitrary and fanciful at all *necessarily* connected with the use of types and double senses; but that such modes of information are capable of being regulated upon the same sort of principles as other symbols and tropical speeches are regulated upon; and that common sense may be able to judge of the propriety or extravagance of these as well as of other figures.

Now it seems very evident from scripture that the redemption of man, by Christ, is the accomplishment of a plan which, beginning to be put in execution at the fall, was carried on continually through several dispensations down to the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom;

Jansenistes, dans l'Histoire qu'il composa de l'Arianisme.....Il se plaît à faire des peintures de l'Arianisme, et des Ariens, ou l'on puisse reconnoître le Jansénisme et les Jansénistes.—Œuvres de Bayle, tom. ii. p. 23.

and that those several prior dispensations were related to this last, as to their fulfilment and perfection; so that it would be very reasonable to expect that these imperfect and preparatory dispensations should contain intimations of that in which they were finally to be completed. I do not mean only so far as they all participated with it in the common general character of righteousness prevailing, by patient endurance, over evil; because, in that way, all civil profane history, and almost every important event, might be treated as a prophecy or type of Christ; but I mean *special* and *designed* intimations of the *peculiarities* of Christ's office and kingdom, and of their circumstances; such as, at least when he came and fulfilled them, might be seen to have been meant to refer *especially* to that fulfilment.

But it was also evidently God's design that a full and public declaration of the nature of Christ's office, work, and kingdom should not be made until the kingdom was actually set up; but that, under a present condescension to men's carnal habits and ideas, their minds should be gradually raised, and prepared for a spiritual dispensation; and the whole structure of the Mosaic œconomy is a witness to this condescen-

sion. Now *types* and *double senses* seem the mode of information precisely suited for such a purpose; and, therefore, it would appear that where we find, in the imperfect dispensations, actions and words that may very properly designate things in the perfect dispensation, we are not rash in supposing that such a designation was intended: for, though signs may be capable of designating many things, which there is no apparent reason to conclude that they were intended to designate,—and there may be some apparent reason for expecting intimations, when yet no intimations are actually to be found,—yet, when both these things concur—when there is reason to *expect* a sign, and a *suitability* in the thing itself *to be* a sign—when there is both a logical propriety and a moral fitness*—there seems to be nothing farther wanting to justify us in proceeding to the interpretation. At least, in such a concurrence, there would seem to be no such intrinsic improbability in the supposition, of an intended connexion between the alleged sign and its correlative, as would justify us in disbelieving the existence of such a connexion, if we were told of it, upon good authority.

* Warburton's Div. Legat. Book vi. s. 6.

To this whole account of the matter it is objected, that it destroys entirely the notion of prophecies which relate to the coming of Christ in a *literal* sense: for, it is argued, if concealment were the object of secondary senses, that object would be defeated by every prophecy that foretold the coming of Christ in a literal sense.

But it seems obvious to remark that the *coming of Christ*, as spoken of in this objection, is a very large word, and may embrace a great number of particulars; such as the mere advent of some great deliverer,—the office, character, and dignity, with which he was to be invested, and all the *specialties* of circumstance connected therewith,—the period, at which he was to be revealed,—the nature of his message,—and many things beside: so that it by no means follows that, because some of these matters might be very clearly published in plain and literal prophecies, therefore everything was so published; or, that, because distinct information was given upon some of these matters, to *particular* generations, at *particular* times, therefore equally distinct information was given to *other* generations, and at *all* times. Besides, some of the *literal* (i. e. not *mystical*)

prophecies were very obscure themselves ; either by reason of their tropical style,—or of the darkness of the context,—or the irregular collocation of the words,—or the improbable nature of the literal sense,—or from all these causes combined : and then, these prophecies are not drawn together into a system, and placed in such an arrangement as to throw mutual light upon each other ; but are scattered, at wide intervals, like stars in a cloudy firmament : and notices, so circumstanced, are almost sure to be overlooked by the careless or incredulous ; while the number, frequency, and systematic construction of TYPES and DOUBLE SENSES, might make it fit that *they* should be involved in peculiar obscurity. Besides, the objection seems to hold equally against the notion of ALL very obscure prophecies of Christ, however that obscurity may be produced.

Neither does it seem any very weighty objection to say, that the prophets themselves do not seem to have understood the secondary sense ; because, in some cases, they seem to have as little understood the single sense of their literal prophecies : and it is not the prophets, but the *Inspirer* of the prophets, that is in this question

to be considered as the author of the predictions : and it is his general scope and purpose that should be looked to, in determining what things the predictions were intended to designate. So that, as we have seen, *grammatical analysis* gives us the same help in bringing out the secondary sense, as it gives us in bringing out the primary. For mere grammatical analysis gives us little more than the *syntactical* coherence of the terms, and their *possible* meanings ; out of which possible meanings, so limited, we choose the actual meaning, by attending to the general scope of the writer. Now, in all cases of the *double sense*, the proposition containing it may be interpreted in that sense, without violating the syntactical coherence, or putting an impossible meaning upon the terms. Indeed, such propositions often suit the secondary sense with much more abstract exactitude than the primary.

Nor does it seem a sufficient objection either to allege that in the context of many supposed double prophecies, and in the circumstances of many supposed types, there are found several things which cannot at all be made to square with their mystical import. For these accidents are common to almost all kinds of *symbols*

and *allegories*.* In almost all parables there are many things introduced which have no sort of designed reference whatever to the *moral import* of the parable ; but are solely intended to give consistency and ornament to the primary fictitious sense : and in almost all symbolical actions there are, and must be, many *adjuncts* and *circumstances* that do not in any way enter into the significant part of the action.

Besides, if we suppose (as it seems reasonable to suppose) that the mode of inspiration lies rather in the suggestion of *ideas*, than of *words*, and that the prophets were at all left to themselves, in clothing and describing their ideas ; we might, beforehand, expect to find that the natural associations, excited by the relations which the ideas supernaturally suggested, as understood by the prophets, bore to their own thoughts, would be often broken by new ideas, supernaturally suggested, and though related to the former suggested ideas, yet not related to their natural associations, so as to give a certain

* “ Typus enim et imago, secundum materiam et secundum substantiam, aliquoties a veritate diversus est : secundum autem habitum et lineamentum debet servare similitudinem.” — *Iren.* lib. ii. c. xi.

abruptness to the transitions, and an apparent incoherence to the style.

On the whole, it seems to be a great mistake to suppose that, in the case of mystical prophecies, there can be no reasonable clue to the *secondary* meaning. For, as, in fables, the author himself sometimes subjoins a moral to guide the reader ; so, in mystical prophecies, God may sometimes commission and accredit an inspired interpreter to declare his meaning : and, as in the case of other allegories, so, in the case of these, intimations of the secondary sense may be given, both in the *words* and in the *things* :—in the words, as we have already seen, by the conversion of the subject, and the hyperbole of the expression ; and in the things, by reason of their typical relation to and close resemblance of, events or persons in the Christian dispensation, when coupled with the known fact that *that* dispensation was the main scope and object of the proper author of prophecy.

III.

IF we search through the whole of the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles*,—in which alone all our authentic accounts of the preaching of Christ and his Apostles to unconverted persons are contained,—we shall find, universally, that a belief in this simple proposition—that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*—was all that was required to make a man capable of admission, by baptism, into the church. As no one can suppose that the efficacy of these words can lie in the sound or number of the syllables composing them, but in the intelligible ideas which they represent; it behoves us to consider in *what sense* this proposition was affirmed by the founders of the church; nor can any one be properly esteemed a *believer* in this proposition, who does not understand the terms of it as they are meant to be understood by its proposers, but attaches to them other notions from what the Holy Spirit intended to convey. A

Jew, for example, who, by the term *Christ*, understood a *temporal*, and not a *spiritual*, deliverer,—such a person, believing that *Jesus is the Christ*, would not be receiving, but rejecting, *the gospel*. In like manner, if a Pagan or Mahomedan were to understand, by the term *Christ*, a messenger from the Supreme Being to the Jewish people, and to them only, such a person might believe Jesus to be that Messenger, without any real faith in *the gospel*; and, consequently, without any title to its privileges.

The title *Christ* denotes *The Anointed*, and is equivalent to the Hebrew term *Messiah*, so as to bear a manifest reference to the Jewish prophecies; and, as our Saviour claimed his peculiar rights under the authority of those writings, it seems proper that we should consider how the Messiah was described in them, in order to obtain a clear understanding of the essential characters of his office. Accordingly we find, that almost always, when, after his resurrection, a belief in Jesus' *Messiahship* is required by any one, a discourse is premised, explanatory of the nature of that Messiahship, for the purpose of securing an intelligent assent. From these discourses, therefore, we may naturally look for information in this matter. They

are not, to be sure, always given at the length, and with all the particularity, which we might desire; but it appears scarce reasonable to suppose that, where the *design* of the narrators seems plainly to have been to give us a competent account of apostolic preaching, and where so many examples of it have been recorded, any essential part has failed of being noticed, in one or other of those examples.

Our Saviour's own first discourse, after his rising from the dead, was that held with the two disciples, upon the road to *Emmaus*. These disciples had, indeed, in some sense, already believed that Jesus was the Christ; but, being in the same popular prejudice with their unbelieving brethren concerning the nature of his office, their faith had been shaken by his crucifixion. We *trusted*, they say (Luke xxiv. 21,) that this *had been* he which *should have redeemed Israel*: words which evidently imply that, in their present apprehensions, his sufferings were inconsistent with that character of *the Redeemer of Israel*. Our Lord's answer is, therefore, directed to remove this prejudice:—O fools! and slow of heart to believe *all that the Prophets have spoken!* Ought not the *Messiah* to have *suffered* these things, and [so] to

enter into his glory? Then, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, *in all the Scriptures*, the things concerning himself. So that we see it was essential to the character of *the Christ* that *he should enter, through sufferings, into a state of glory*. Of this glory we learn something more, in our Lord's next discourse to the eleven Apostles, narrated in the same chapter (v. 36.) "These (says he,) are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they should understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, *Thus it was written*, and thus it behoved *the Christ* to *suffer*, and to *rise again the third day*, and *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached to all nations* IN HIS NAME." So that it would seem that part of this *glory*, obtained by Christ's *sufferings*, consisted in this,—that *all nations of the world were to trust in him, for obtaining, through him, repentance and forgiveness*.

All this will receive additional light, if we compare it with the accounts given by St.

Matthew and St. Mark, of our Lord's discourses at this time.

St. Mark's account seems to refer to the very same occasion as that just mentioned by St. Luke. And he said unto them, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 15.

St. Matthew is more explicit:—*All power is given unto me in heaven and earth; Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name (or acknowledgment) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world* (Matt. xxviii. 18.) Here then Christ's glory is explained to consist in the donation to him of universal Sovereignty over creation, with a promise that his faithful subjects should be eternally rewarded, and his enemies punished: and, grounded upon this grant of absolute dominion, we have also a command to found, by the rite of Baptism, a visible society of men, who should take on themselves the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; i. e. in the

Hebrew phrase, profess a belief in that economy: so that we see that *belief in the Holy Ghost* is distinctly required; since it is into this belief that men are baptized, and, without baptism into this belief, there is no promise of salvation. Let us see then, as before, what is meant by the belief in the Holy Ghost, here required.

Our Lord had, all along, intimated to the Apostles that one of his first acts, when he should enter into his glory, would be to send upon them *a Power from on high—another Comforter*. Behold, I send *the promise of my Father* upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with *power from on high* (Luke xxiv. 49.) This promise was visibly fulfilled in the miraculous effusion of fiery tongues on the day of Pentecost. But, that its whole meaning was not terminated within the miraculous gifts then conferred, appears evidently from many considerations. St. Luke, apparently relating the same discourse of our Lord's, as that last quoted, adds, in another place, the following particulars. He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for *the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me,*

For John truly baptized with water; *but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence* (Acts i. 4, 5.) Here our Lord plainly refers the Apostles to a previous explanation which he had given them of *the promise of the Father*: and I think there is no reasonable ground for doubting that that explanation was given in the discourse, which St. John has recorded, in xiv. xv. xvi. chapters of his gospel. There we are distinctly told, that it is by the presence of this Divine Person, whom *the Father shall send in Christ's name*, that the Father and the Son shall be present with his disciples; which blessing—i. e. the indwelling of God in Christ in their hearts—Jesus, in the next chapter (xvii. 20,) requests not only for the Apostles, but for their followers also, in all ages: which farther seems to fix the meaning of the last words of St. Matthew's gospel—*Lo! I AM WITH YOU always, even unto the end of the world. To baptize with the Holy Ghost* is, indeed, more than once mentioned as the peculiar office of Messiah, and as that in which his ministry exceeded that of John (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33;) and whoever compares the passages, wherein that baptism by

the Holy Ghost is mentioned, with our Saviour's conversation with *Nicodemus* (John iii. 5, 6, 8,) will see reason for concluding that it means the same as *spiritual regeneration*. The indwelling of the Spirit is, throughout Scripture, spoken of as the peculiar privilege of the christian church; and therefore the first descent of the Divine presence, in the Spirit, into his new temple, was, for the greater evidence and solemnity, attended with such visible splendour as attended the descent of the *Shechinah* upon the temple of Solomon; but we are not to suppose that the external *manifestation of the Spirit** was the whole, or the chief part of his graces: on the contrary, St. Paul has expressly told us (1 Cor. xiii.) that charity is his principal function and permanent office.

Upon laying all these things together, we seem to collect, as the result of them, that we are called on to receive Jesus as the anointed of God; who, in consequence of his sufferings unto death, has been raised to life again, and exalted to glory, and entrusted with all power in heaven and earth; to the end that we, repenting of our sins, might receive remission of

* “φανέρωσιν δὲ πνεύματος τὰ σημεῖα καλεῖ,” says Chrysostom. See also Theodoret upon the place. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

the same, and also his presence in our souls by the Holy Ghost; which he will bestow upon our publicly professing, by Baptism, this our faith in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; or our submission to that kingdom which the Father has given to the Son, to be administered by the Holy Ghost. If to this we add the consideration that our Lord, in his lifetime, had always admitted and affirmed the Jewish doctrines of a *resurrection* and *future judgment*, we shall perceive that the salvation, promised to the subjects of this kingdom, must refer, or extend to, their restoration, in body and soul, to the happiness of a future state; for this is what any Jewish hearer would understand by the word *salvation* in such a context.

Let us next consider what farther information may be gathered from the sermons of the apostles, as they are recorded in the *Acts*. The first that suits our purpose—that is, the first delivered to unbelieving auditors—is St. Peter's discourse upon the day of Pentecost, immediately after the descent of the Holy Ghost. (Acts ii. 14—37.) Arguing from *the scriptures of the prophets*, he proves to the Jews that an effusion of the Holy Ghost upon

all flesh, attended with, and attested by visible miraculous effects, was to take place; that the Messiah was to die and rise again from the dead; and to be exalted at God's right hand, endued with the power of bestowing the Spirit upon his people, and made victorious over all his enemies; wherefore, he concludes, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God *hath made* this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and CHRIST. Upon this the multitude demand what they must do; and the apostle replies, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,* even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* In which words the promise of the Holy Ghost is spoken of as unlimited in either time or extent; being made both to the present generation and to their descendants, as well to *those afar off*, in every region of the world, or however separated from Israel, as to the people of Judea.

In the next chapter there is another sermon of the same apostle's; (iii. 12—26.) in which

* *eis μακραν*. See Raphelius. Others, however, explain this of the Gentiles, or to the dispersed Jews, as Kuinoël in loc.

he tells the Jews that they had killed *the Prince* (first leader or author) *of life*,*—words which imply that Christ had the power of giving that same eternal life which he had obtained at his resurrection, to those who should obey him. St. Peter further adds this exhortation:—*Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send this same fore-ordained Jesus; whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets.* For Moses truly said unto the fathers: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; *him shall ye hear in all things. . . . And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.* Hence, we learn that it is part of Christ's commission to return again, at a period of refreshing and comfort to the righteous, but of punishment to the disobedient; at which period a final sentence

* Ἀρχηγός, *auctor vitæ*. Hoc significatu A. sæpius recurrit, ut ap. Diod. Sic. p. 84. A. ubi Cyaxares dicitur ἀρχηγός τῆς τῶν δλων ἡγεμονίας. Joseph. Ant. vii. 8. πολλῶν ἀρχηγός κακῶν. Kuinoël in locum.

of condemnation or acquittal is to be expected.

In the next chapter, St. Peter tells the Sanhedrim that there is salvation in no other than Jesus ; since there is none other name, under heaven, given amongst men, by which they can be saved, (iv. 12.) i.e., men can only be saved by acknowledging the office and authority of Jesus as Messiah ; which doctrine, upon another occasion, he expresses thus : That God had raised up Jesus, and exalted him with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and remission of their sins ; of which, he says, the apostles were witnesses, and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. (v. 31, 32.)

We have another remarkable discourse, delivered by St. Peter also, to Cornelius, (x. 36.) in which the apostle tells him that Jesus is Lord of all—i.e., has all power given him in heaven and earth ; that he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power ; that he is appointed of God to be the Judge of quick and dead, and that by his name (i.e., by acknowledging his office) whosoever trusteth in him shall receive remission of sins. So far, we have considered the preaching of St. Peter, let us now turn to that of St. Paul.

Three of St. Paul's discourses are given to us at some length. The first is related chap. xiii. 16—41. We declare, says he, glad tidings; how that the promise, which was made of God unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. . . . Be it known unto you, therefore, that by this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

The apostle seems here to rest Christ's title of Son of God upon his resurrection; and I think our translators are right, in giving this sense to *ἀναστήσας*, in verse 33. It is so used Acts ii. 24, and this sense is accordant with the analogy of faith or general tenor of the New Testament. As this is a matter of some moment, the reader will pardon me, if I make a short digression, for the purpose of placing it in a fuller light.

The author to the Hebrews, (whom I believe to have been St. Paul himself) undertaking to prove that Christ is possessed of higher dignity than the angels, argues thus: When Christ

had, by himself, purged our sins, he for ever sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become (γενόμενος) so much better than the angels, by how much he hath inherited a more excellent name than they; For to which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my SON, this day have I begotten thee? (Heb. i. 5.)

It seems plainly intimated, in these words, that the name of Son expresses the state of dignity into which Christ entered, when he sat down at the right hand of God. It is said that he then became (for that is the true force of *γινώμας* with a predicate) better than the angels; and the proof and measure of this superiority is derived from the name which was then applied to him; and that name was given him in these words:—Thou art my Son; to-day have I begotten thee! I cannot, therefore, agree with those who refer these words to the eternal generation of the Son, and argue that the word to-day, being spoken by an infinite being, must express an infinite time. I am not aware of any other place of scripture where *to-day* is used to denote eternity. On the contrary, there seem to be many passages in which (although spoken by God) it must be allowed

to denote a limited period of time. As, for instance, Ps. xcv. 7, To-day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts. Indeed, the very context of the second Psalm itself appears to reclaim against this scholastic interpretation. It opens with a description (as the Holy Ghost interprets it, Acts iv. 27,) of the combination between Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish rulers and people, to put Jesus to death; after which follows immediately the setting him up as King upon Mount Zion, and the decree declaring him Son of God and heir of all things. So that the context leads us to a definite epoch, to which the word *to-day* is to be referred.

Nor can I think that these words are to be referred to Christ's miraculous conception by the power of the Holy Ghost. By that miraculous conception the Word became flesh—i.e. became lower than the angels, as the author of this epistle distinctly tells us, ch. ii. 19, and was not exalted above them until he had suffered death.

Light may, I think, be thrown upon this matter by a comparison of other places of scripture.

The resurrection of Jesus to a state of dignity seems evidently spoken of as a generation,

Col. i. 8, where Christ, having been styled, in his pre-existent state, the Image of the invisible God, the FIRST BORN of all creation, is called, in his resurrection state, the Beginning, the FIRST BORN from the dead, that in all things (i.e. both in creation and in redemption) he might become chief. (γενήται πρωτεύων.) The same title is again given him, Rev. i. 5, together with another, significant also of his present elevation, —the ‘Prince of the kings of the earth.’ As Christians are considered as mystically one with Christ, and partakers of the acts of him who is their head and pattern, so this figure is applied to them also, 1 Peter i. 3, where God is said to have begotten us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This consideration seems to explain the language of St. Paul, Rom. i. 4, where he says that Christ was made of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, but constituted (ὁρισθέντος) the SON OF GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. Here, as by the words *according to the flesh*, I understand Christ’s carnal relation to the Jewish people, so by the words *according to the Spirit*, I understand his spiritual relation to the Christian church. In regard of this spiritual relation,

he was, upon his resurrection, constituted Son of God in a peculiar sense; being then given to be Head over all things to the church. Furthermore, as Christians, forasmuch as they are mystically one with Christ, are said to be already, in his resurrection, born again, so they are said actually, and in the full sense of the word, to become the sons of God, by their own resurrection from the dead. Thus (Rom. viii. 19—30.) St. Paul tells us that the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God; i.e. the time when the creature shall be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; (v. 19.) i.e. when we shall receive the adoption (*υιοθεσια*)—to wit, the redemption of the body. And this, he says, was the scope of God's decree from the beginning, who predestinated us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the FIRST-BORN amongst many brethren. And our Saviour himself, speaking of the righteous in a future state, says that they shall be the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. (Luke xx. 36.) And this glory of the righteous is, every where in the New Testament, spoken of as a participation of that reward which was given to Christ for his perfect obedience unto death.

On the whole, this interpretation seems to me both the most obvious sense of St. Paul's words, and the most consistent with the general tenor of scripture. From the rest of his discourse, we learn that, to those who repent of their sins, trust in Christ is the only condition for being justified before God—i.e. treated as righteous by him. St. Paul's next discourse is that which he delivered in the Areopagus; wherein, having first (as was necessary with idolaters) vindicated the honour of God the Father, he proceeds to tell the Athenians that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he had ordained; whereof he had given assurance unto all men, by raising him from the dead; (Acts xvii. 31.) at which words he was interrupted by his incredulous audience. But afterwards, in his apology before Agrippa, he gives a short summary of his preaching. "I continue witnessing both to small and great. . . . that Christ should suffer, and he should be THE FIRST to rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and the Gentiles." (xxvi. 23.) What this shewing of light means, he had just before explained, by relating his commission, as given by the Lord himself: "I send thee to the people and to the Gentiles, to open their

eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of their sins, and inheritance amongst them that are SANCTIFIED, through FAITH IN ME." So that the illumination promised implies a state of pardon and sanctification, into which men are admitted by faith in Christ. On the whole, our deduction from our Saviour's discourses is confirmed and illustrated, by this comparison of them with the preaching of his apostles. The doctrine taught by them seems briefly this, that in consequence of Christ's sufferings, God has given him all power in heaven and earth; and promises forgiveness of sins, and the sanctification of the Spirit, and everlasting life, to all who truly repent and trust in him for the attainment of those blessings; and profess their faith, by being admitted by baptism into his service; and has appointed a day when the period of probation shall cease, and Christ shall pronounce final judgment upon all mankind.

IV.

THAT some of the Books of the New Testament contain in them all the essential articles of the faith, will appear very probable, if we consider the way in which some of the authors describe their own design in composing them.

St. Luke, for instance, thus explains the object which he proposed to himself, in writing his gospel.

“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word: it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed.” (Luke i. 1—4.)

It appears plain, from these words, that St. Luke's design was of the same nature as the design of the many, concerning whom he speaks. Their design was to set forth an orderly account of the things most firmly believed amongst christians; and it seems very harsh to suppose that the class of things, so described, did not contain in it the fundamental articles of the faith of christians. If it did, then it was undoubtedly St. Luke's design to give Theophilus an account of the fundamental articles of the faith. Besides, St. Luke wrote to give Theophilus more accurate information touching those things wherein he had been orally instructed; * words which are generally taken to imply that he was already a disciple, and had received the preparatory instruction, or catechesis, by which men were made ready for baptism. Now this instruction was nothing else but an institution in the essential articles of the faith.

In the commencement of the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke gives, in other words, a similar account of his design.

* Prima ac propria verbi significatio est edoceri, et quidem viva voce edoceri. Acts xviii. 2; Rom. ii. 18; 1 Cor. xiv. 19; Gal. vi. 6. Neque ulla adest idonea ratio quæ nos commovere possit, ut ab ea h. l. recedamus, confirmatur potius verbo γράφειν quod τῷ κατηχεῖσθαι opposuit Lucas.—Kuinoël.

“The former Treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day that he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen.” (Acts i. 1, 2.)

Now, though we cannot take all things, in this passage, in its strict and absolute sense, yet it seems hard to give it a lower meaning than such as should include the weightiest and most important things.

St. John also tells us the design of his gospel in these words:—

“These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John xx. 31.)

We may indeed refer the expression *these things* (ταῦτα) solely to the miracles mentioned in the preceding verse, and suppose that the Evangelist only meant to say that he had recorded them for the purpose of giving proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus; but if we consider that the phrase *these things* (ταῦτα) is a customary one with St. John, to denote the whole tenor of his writing, on any particular occasion (as in John xxi. 24. 1 John i. 4; ii. 1, 26;

v. 14;) and that it was plainly his wish, in the gospel, to select such miracles as manifested Christ's glory and illustrated the nature of his office; and that his care seems not to have been to relate a great number of miracles, so much as to preserve such of our Lord's discourses as explained the objects and character of his mission. If we consider this, I think it ought to appear very probable that St. John's design was not only to give proofs of the faith, but such an explanation of it also as should suffice for eternal life; i. e. to enable us to give a rational and intelligent assent to this great doctrine, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that, by so doing, we might obtain salvation through him.

V.

THAT immemorial and universally-adopted title, THE NEW COVENANT (ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη), under which the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists have come down to us, appears to be a strong evidence of the judgment of antiquity, that all necessary truths are to be found in them. That title is manifestly used in allusion to the title of the writings of Moses and the Prophets—THE OLD COVENANT;* and, as there is no doubt that those writings contained fully the sole conditions of God's Covenant with the Jewish Church, so the annexation of a similar title to these writings seems undeniably to imply that they, in like manner, contain

* The term *old covenant* is applied by St. Paul to the books of Moses and the prophets, 2 Cor. iii. 14. In the same chapter he speaks of the gospel as the *new covenant*. The title *Gospels*, or *Gospel* (for the four were regarded as one document—*quadriforme evangelium*) is certainly as old as Justin Martyr, and probably as old as Ignatius.

fully the sole conditions of God's Covenant with the Christian Church.

That ancient and universal title also—THE GOSPEL—prefixed to the narratives of the Evangelists, appears, in like manner, to shew that in the judgment of those early ages in which it was prefixed to them, they contain all the fundamental portions of the christian faith; for this is the sense in which the term *gospel* is generally used in the New Testament itself, and in writers of primitive antiquity.

If the Primitive Church, then, knew no conditions of the New Covenant, over and above what are contained in these writings, it is manifest that no such conditions can have descended by any general tradition to us. This conclusion is strongly confirmed by the explicit declarations of several ancient writers.

Irenæus, for instance, who flourished in the second century, speaks thus of the writings of the Evangelists:—"The Lord of all gave to his Apostles the power of the gospel, and by them we have been made acquainted with the truth; that is, the doctrine of the Son of God, to whom the Lord said, He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and him that sent me. For we have known

the economy of salvation by no others but those by whom the gospel has come down to us; which gospel they at first preached orally, but afterwards, by the will of God, delivered to us in the Scriptures, **TO BE THE FOUNDATION AND PILLAR OF OUR FAITH.** For we must not say that they taught before they had a perfect knowledge of the subject, as certain persons presume to say, who boast that they can correct the Apostles. For, after our Lord's resurrection, when they had been endued with power from on high by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, and had acquired a full knowledge of the truth, they went unto the ends of the earth, declaring the glad tidings of those good things which God hath given to us, and publishing heavenly peace to mankind; possessing, all and singular, the gospel of God. So Matthew put forth a scripture of the gospel for the Hebrews, in their own language; while Peter and Paul preached at Rome, and laid the foundations of the church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered down in writing the things which had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the follower of Paul, digested into a book the gospel preached by that Apostle. Then John, the

disciple of the Lord, who lay upon his breast, published the gospel also, while dwelling at Ephesus in Asia. All these have delivered to us that there is one God, maker of heaven and earth, as declared by the Prophets ; and one Christ, the Son of God : and whoever does not assent to these despises not only those who are partakers with the Lord, but also the Lord Christ himself, and his Father, and is self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation ; which is the case of all heretics : for, when they are refuted out of the Scriptures, they betake themselves to accusing the Scriptures themselves, as if they were not correct, nor of any authority, but written ambiguously, and impossible to be understood except by those who know tradition." (Lib. iii. c. i. ii.)

" It is impossible that there should be more or fewer gospels than those which we receive : For, since there are four climes of the world in which we are, and four cardinal winds, and the church is diffused over the whole earth, and the gospel is the pillar and ground of the church and the SPIRIT OF LIFE ; it is fit that the church should have four pillars, breathing immortality from every point, and giving life to men." (Lib. c. xi.) From which testimonies it

is plain that Irenæus supposed the essentials of salvation to be fully contained in the four gospels.

In the same way Origen, in his commentaries on St. John (Origen, *Hust.* part ii, p. 5), after determining that the four gospels are the first-fruits of scripture, and more honourable than the rest of the New Testament, proceeds,

“ But I suppose that whereas there are four gospels, as it were THE ELEMENTS OF THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH, of which elements the whole world, reconciled to God by Jesus, is composed—the Gospel of St. John is the first fruits of them all.”

Origen is no less express in declaring for the absolute perfection of the whole scripture.

“ I suppose,” says he of a certain type in the Old Testament, “ that by this is meant the two Testaments, in which we may seek and examine everything that pertains to God, and from them derive all true knowledge; but if there be anything beyond them, and which the sacred scripture does not determine, no third scripture is to be brought in as authority for faith, but we must consign to the fire what remains—i. e., we must reserve it to God; since God did not choose we should know

everything in the present life." (Hom. v. in Levit.)

And again:—

"The learned Christian knows that the whole scripture is the one perfect instrument of God, accomplishing, in its various tones, one saving melody for those who are willing to hear, and causing to cease, or preventing, the whole energy of the evil spirit, even as the music of David caused the evil Spirit to cease from Saul." (Philocal. c. vi.)

To the same effect, Origen's master, Clemens of Alexandria, who, proposing to himself the question—How truth was to be discovered in religious matters amidst the infinite variety of opinions? proceeds thus:—

"If it be allowed that there is such a thing as demonstration, then it necessarily follows that we must descend to accurate investigation, and learn demonstratively, by means of the scriptures themselves, how heresies fell away, and how perfect knowledge is only in the truth, and in the ancient and Catholic church. For those who are ready to labour for the noble objects will not cease their search after truth until they receive demonstration from the scriptures themselves; for we have the Lord

as the principle (ἀρχή) of our teaching, who, in sundry ways and diverse manners, by the prophets, and by the gospel, and by the blessed apostles—conducts from the beginning to the end of knowledge." (Strom. vii. pp. 755, 756, 757.) In the same place he tells us, "The scripture and word of the Lord is the criterion for the discovery of things," that those who have only tasted the scriptures possess faith; but that those who advance farther in them, have knowledge; and that there is one Catholic church which brings together the elect to the unity of that one faith, which is according to its proper Testaments, or rather one Testament, delivered at various times, with much more, to the same effect.

And so Irenæus, whom I before quoted for a more specific object,

"Read more carefully the gospel which was given to us by the Apostles; read more carefully the prophets; and ye will find, that all which our Lord did, and taught, and suffered is preached in them." (Lib. iv. c. lxvi. ad finem.) So that in his judgment there was no article of faith which might not be collected from the Old Testament, when interpreted by the New. For the whole context shews that *in ipsis* (in

them) refers here to the prophets; and it is likely that, instead of *prædicatam* (preached), we should read *prædictam* (foretold): and his argument necessarily requires that the whole of what was foretold in the prophets—i. e., all that Christ did, and taught, and suffered—was to be found fulfilled in the New Testament. This appears also, from his words, in the next chapter:—

“ Whence could the prophets preach the gospel beforehand of the coming of the royal Prophet, and that liberty which was given by him, and foretel all things which were done by Christ, and his discourse, and his sufferings, and preach the new covenant, if they had received their inspiration from another God? ” *

* Compare also these words of Hippolytus:—“ There is one God, whom we know no otherwise than by the Holy Scriptures. For, as if one desired to practise the wisdom of this world, he could discover it nowhere but in the teaching of the philosophers; so we, who desire to practise divine piety, can find the rules of it nowhere but in the oracles of God. So much, therefore, as the Scriptures proclaim, let us see: so much as they teach, let us know. As the Father chooses to be believed, let us believe Him: as the Son chooses to be glorified, let us glorify Him: as the Spirit chooses to be given, let us receive Him; not following our own choice, nor the devices of our own minds—not putting violence upon the gifts of God, but seeing all things in that light in which He himself chose to exhibit them in the Holy Scriptures.”—(C. Noet. s. ix.)

There are large and very express testimonies, to the same effect, in the works of later writers.

Cyril of Jerusalem, for instance, undertaking to deliver the fundamentals of the faith, speaks thus:—

“It is necessary that, where the sacred and divine mysteries of the faith are concerned, nothing, however slight, should be delivered without the testimony of scripture, neither do thou simply believe these things on my word without obtaining demonstration of what is proposed to you from the scriptures; for this salvation of faith is not by witty speech, but by demonstration of the Holy Scriptures.” (Catech. iv.)

And Athanasius:—

“The holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient for the preaching of the truth.” (Orat. c. Gentes.)

And Basil,

“It is necessary that every word and thing should be approved to faith by the testimony of the inspired Scripture, for the full assurance of the good, and for the reprehension of the evil.” (Ethic. def. xxvi.)

And again:—

“Faith is an unhesitating assent to the

things which we hear, in full assurance of their truth, as being propounded by God; it is, therefore, a manifest falling from faith, either to reject anything that is written, or to bring in anything that is not written. For the apostle warns us by a human example against adding to, or taking from, the inspired Scriptures, where he says, Though it were a man's Testament, yet, once confirmed, no one can disannul it, or add thereto." (T. ii. p. 251.)

And again, (manifestly interpreting 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

"All Scripture is inspired and profitable, being written for this very purpose by the Spirit, that in it, as in a common repository of medicines for the soul, all we of the human race might find each the remedy of his own sickness." (T. i. p. 125.)

And Theophylact, who generally speaks the sense of the most approved Greek expositors, thus explains the same text:—

"Paul, having mentioned many methods of consolation, now introduces the greatest of all; that derived from the perusal of the Scriptures. He is about to tell Timothy a last piece of intelligence,—even his own approaching dissolution. In order, therefore, that he might not

fall, when deprived of his assistance, you have, says he, the Holy Scriptures, which, instead of me, are able to profit you—for doctrine. For there is no difficulty which may not be solved by Scripture, for reproof; if falsehood is to be confuted, the means are there. For correction, &c., this also is ready at hand in Scripture—that nothing of those things which are good may be wanting to the man of God.”

VI.

THERE would seem to be no sort of antecedent reason for presuming that the writings of the New Testament should be so obscure, in what relates to matters essential to salvation, as that it should be impossible or very difficult to ascertain their meaning, beyond all reasonable doubt, by the application of the same rules and principles of criticism as are usually sufficient for the interpretation of other ancient writings. The first converts to Christianity were not generally men of extensive learning or great acuteness ; but, for the most part, persons of small education and mean capacities. Now writings designed for the use of such persons are generally made as plain, in important matters at least, as the writers have ability or leisure to make them ; or so plain as to be readily understood by an honest mind, using

honest care and diligence in the examination of their meaning.

The New Testament is a pretty large collection of several distinct treatises, written on different occasions, by several distinct writers; and the same subjects recur frequently, and are largely discussed, more than once, by the same authors, in different places, and by different authors. So that, for fixing the sense of an author's expressions in one place, we have not only the context of that place, but also his parallel expressions in other places, and on other occasions, and the context of those other places; and, besides these, we have the parallel expressions of other authors, and the context of those expressions; so that we have peculiar helps for ascertaining, from the book itself, the general sense of its composers upon most important matters, arising from the great variety of expression and absolute conformity of substance, to be found in the inspired writers.

That the apostles, in their preaching of the essentials of salvation, made use of no affected obscurity is very evident from St. Paul's own words: We use, says he, great plainness of speech; and are not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could

not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. (2 Cor. iii. 12.)

And again, We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, (i.e. all equivocating concealment and ambiguity) not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (iv. 2.) Therefore, he concludes, there can be no room for mistake, but through perverse prejudice. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the Prince of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. Now there seems to be no particular reason for supposing that the apostles used less plainness of speech in their writings than in their preaching.*

Nor does it seem to be any reasonable objection to this argument, drawn from the manner of the apostolic teaching, to say that some of the things revealed are, in the very notion of them, hard to be understood; even if it could be shewn (as I do not think it can be shewn) that such things are necessary to salvation. For, either it must be said that such things cannot be made sufficiently intelligible, by

* See Note (A).

means of words, to be understood, and so believed, by ordinary persons; which is, in effect, to own that they are not necessary to salvation at all, or else, it must be maintained, that some words which were spoken by the apostles could not be written by the apostles.

Whatever considerations have a tendency to prove that the writings of the New Testament were designed to be the rule of faith, and to secure the church against the defects of oral tradition, in transmitting the doctrines of the gospel, tend also to prove that they are not necessarily dependent upon an oral tradition of their meaning, for rendering them intelligible. For a rule is only a rule so far forth as it is intelligible to those who are to be guided by it; and a rule may just as completely, and will as probably be perverted by false interpretations of its words as by mutilations of its words, or additions to them. And this—namely, perversions of the rule of faith by oral traditive interpretations of it—was the very crime of the Jewish teachers; and the Old Testament had been made so plain (in all things essential under the Mosaic œconomy) as to leave the people without excuse for acquiescing in those interpretations; and our Lord expressly referred to

the old scriptures as sufficient to testify of him and refute the false opinions concerning the Messiah, which the rulers had propagated, and tells the Jews that the reason why they rejected him was because they had not the word of God abiding in them: (John v. 38, 39.) and St. Luke commends the Jews of Berea for searching the Old Testament and judging for themselves of its meaning. So that the analogy of the two Testaments tends to shew that the New Testament was designed to be as intelligible as the Old.

We have seen that the apostles wrote, in several instances, to correct mistakes concerning the meaning of their oral teaching; and it is reasonable to suppose that the occurrence of such mistakes must have suggested to them the fitness of making their writings so intelligible as not to be necessarily dependent upon traditive interpretations of their meaning.

This notion, that the writings of the New Testament are necessarily dependent upon oral tradition for the ascertainment of their sense, appears to have originated with the heretics; and receives no sort of countenance from the orthodox writers of early times. Irenæus tells us that the heretics, in his time, maintained

that the scriptures were written ambiguously, and incapable of being understood, except by those who knew tradition. (Lib. iii. c. 1.) This pretence he, in that place, evidently treats as a false accusation against the scriptures, and mentions it as a proof of the perversity of the heretics. Irenæus indeed speaks very explicitly of the perspicuity of the scriptures. "A sound mind," says he, "which would shun hazard, fearing God and loving truth, will be ready to meditate in such things as God hath placed in man's power, and proposed as fit for his knowledge; and in such things it will make progress, rendering the lessons which they teach easy by continual study; and these things are such as lie before our eyes, and are spoken plainly, and without ambiguity, in so many words, in the scriptures; and, therefore, parables and tropical speeches must be so expounded as to be in harmony with the plain passages. . . . otherwise no one can have any rule of truth. . . . But the whole scripture, both prophetical and evangelical, is (in our way) plain and without ambiguity, and may be equally heard by all.' (Lib. ii. c. 46.)

In which words Irenæus seems evidently to imply that all essential matters are clearly ex-

pressed in scripture. Clemens of Alexandria also appears to think the scriptures sufficiently clear for the refutation of heretics, who can only evade their force, by putting manifestly forced interpretations upon them.

"They," says he, "choose out the things which are ambiguously expressed, culling here and there a few isolated expressions, paying no attention to the sense, but only to the mere sound of the words. . . . But truth is not to be found by playing upon ambiguous senses; for so all true doctrines would be overturned; but by considering what is perfectly suitable and befitting the Lord, and God Almighty; and by confirming every thing that we prove from scripture by a comparison of parallel scriptures. . . . But when the arguments of the heretics are overturned by us, and we shew clearly that they are opposed to the scriptures, they are either obliged to deny their own systems or to despise the prophets." (Strom. vii. p. 757.)

So that Clemens' rule for interpreting scripture was to consult right reason, and the collation of passages; and he deemed scripture very intelligible, upon the application of such a rule.*

The testimony of John Chrysostom is very

* For Origen's opinion, see Note (B).

full and clear. Proposing to answer an excuse for neglecting the reading of scripture, derived from its obscurity, he speaks thus :—

“ The Holy Spirit ordered these books to be composed by publicans, fishmongers, shepherds and tentmakers ; for this very end, that no illiterate person might be able to betake himself to this excuse, but that everything might be easy to be understood : that artizans, slaves, and old women might profit by them. For those whom the Holy Ghost deigned to endue with his gifts, did not perform their task like the philosophers. The philosophers involved their most useful lessons in enigmatic obscurity : but the Apostles and Prophets took a different course, speaking in a manner clear and manifest to all ; so that every man, by himself, might be able to understand what they said by merely reading it. For who is there that cannot readily understand everything in the gospels ? ” (Hom. iii. in Lazarum.)

And Augustine.

“ Amongst those things which are plainly expressed in Scripture, are to be found all those things which concern faith and good manners.” (De Doctr. Christ. lib. iii. c. 9.)

Nor shall we, I think, be able to find any

ecclesiastical writer of any respectable antiquity, who ever so much as suspected that the Scriptures were not, in all essential matters, abundantly perspicuous. After all, the question of fact concerning the perspicuity of Scripture, must be decided by experience; and it seems impossible, in the nature of things, that any indirect proof can convince a man that a document *is* not intelligible without some particular aid, which he is conscious that he does understand without it; or that *that* is not the natural sense of words, which he sees, with his own eyes, *is* the natural sense of them.

VII.

IF we examine the works of early christian writers, we shall find that there were certain summaries of fundamental articles of faith,—a belief in which was deemed necessary and adequate to salvation,—generally adopted among the churches, in their time. These summaries were recited by the candidates for baptism, as professions of their faith; and, upon making such a profession, they were admitted to become members of the christian community. These summaries were commonly called *the rule of truth*, or of *faith*; as comprehending those articles, with respect to which no diversity of opinion could be permitted; and, though they vary from each other in some respects, there is a remarkable agreement in their general structure and substance, as we shall see by comparing such accounts of them as have come down to us. Irenæus thus expresses the *rule of truth*.

“The church, though disseminated over the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, having received from the apostles, and from their disciples, this faith, (i. e. in one God, the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, the seas, and all that are therein; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who, by the prophets, preached the *œconomies*, and the advents,—both the birth, of a virgin, of the beloved one, Christ Jesus our Lord, and his suffering, and resurrection from the dead, and his bodily ascension into heaven; as also his coming from heaven, in the glory of the Father, to gather all things again into one head, and to raise all flesh of the human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, and God, and Saviour, and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess to him, and that he should pass just judgment upon all; sending into eternal fire the wicked spirits, and the angels which transgressed and revolted, and also unjust and lawless and ungodly men; but, upon the just and holy, and those who

have kept his commandments and continued in his love [some from the beginning, and some after repentance,] conferring the free gift of incorruptible life and the crown of everlasting glory)—having received, I say, this preaching and this faith, the church, though disseminated through all the world, diligently preserves it. For, though the languages of the world are various, yet the sense (δύναμις) of the tradition is one and the same. And, as the sun, the creature of God, in all the world is one and the same, so also the preaching of the truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all who desire to come to a knowledge of the truth; and neither will he who, among the presidents of the churches, is mighty in word, say other than these things (for no one is above his master;) nor will he who is weak in speech diminish from the tradition: for the faith being one and the same, neither does he who can say much concerning it, make it larger; nor he who says little, less." (Lib. 1. c. ii. iii.)

Tertullian, also, has noticed this rule of faith more than once in his works. In the first chapter of his Discourse of the Virgin's Veil, he speaks thus:—

“Our Lord Jesus Christ has called himself

truth, not *custom*. If Christ be always, and before all, truth also is an eternal and ancient thing. Let those, therefore, look to it, to whom that is new, which is in itself old. It is not so much novelty as truth which refutes heresies. Whatever is against truth is a heresy, although it be an old custom. Besides, it is a man's own fault if he is ignorant of anything. He was as much obliged to seek out that which he is ignorant of, as to receive that which he acknowledges. The rule of faith, indeed, is the only one alone incapable of change or reformation,—that rule, I mean, which requires us to believe in one God Almighty, maker of the world ; and his son Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead the third day, taken up into heaven, now sitting at the right hand of the Father, and about to come to judge the quick and the dead, by the resurrection also of the flesh. While this law of faith remains, other matters of discipline and behaviour admit of new correction, by that grace of God which operates and increases unto the end."

And again, in his prescriptions against heretics :—

“ Let us seek discoveries only in what is our own, and from those who are our own, and concerning what is our own ; let us enquire only after that which may be discovered without prejudice to the rule of faith ; Now the rule of faith is that, in accordance wherewith we believe, that there is but one God, and he no other than the maker of the world, who produced all things from nothing, by his word first of all sent forth ; that this word was called his Son, was seen in diverse manners by the patriarchs, always heard in the prophets, finally brought down, by the Spirit and power of God the Father, into the Virgin Mary, made flesh in her womb, and born of her a man, and that this word is Jesus Christ ; then, that he preached the new law, and the new promise of the kingdom of heaven, wrought miracles, was crucified, rose again the third day, and, being snatched up into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father ; that he sent the vicarious energy of the Holy Spirit to actuate the faithful ; and that he shall come with glory to assume the saints into a participation of the fruit of eternal life, and the heavenly promises ; but to condemn the profane to eternal fire, both classes being restored to life with a resur-

rection of the flesh. This rule, instituted (as we shall prove) by Christ, has no questions among us, save such as heretics raise, and such as make heretics. But, while this rule remains entire and in its proper place, push your enquiries and examinations as far as you please, and loose all the reins of your inquisitive desire of knowledge, wherever anything seems to you either doubtful through ambiguity, or dark through obscurity of expression. Thy faith, says the text, hath saved thee : not thy skill in the Scriptures. Faith is placed in the rule, having its law and salvation from an observance of the law." (Chap. xii. xiii. xiv.)

And a third time, in the second chapter of his book against Praxeas.

" We believe, indeed, in one God ; but under such a dispensation or economy as to allow that there is also a Son of this one God, who is his word, who proceeded from him, and by (per) whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made ;—that he was sent by the Father into the Virgin, and of her born, man and God—the Son of Man and the Son of God,—and called Jesus Christ ;—that he suffered, died, was buried according to the Scriptures, raised by the Father, and taken up again

into heaven ; that he sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come to judge the quick and the dead ; that he sent from thence, according to his promise, the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, who sanctifies the faith of those who believe in the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

It does not seem necessary to enter into any minute details, in order to shew that the matters contained in these summaries, where they agree together, are also contained in the New Testament ; and that they are contained in the New Testament, at least as intelligibly as they are expressed in these rules of faith. But it is obvious to remark that the variations between the rules given by these two writers, Irenæus and Tertullian, and the variations between the three several copies of the rules as given by Tertullian alone, appear undeniably to indicate that, in testifying to the Apostolical origin of this rule, these writers did not mean to testify to the apostolic origin of any given set of words, delivered down as a prescribed verbal form by the Apostles ; (for it is not to be supposed that they would have presumed to vary, in the smallest particular, from such a form, if it had existed) ; but that they testified to their own

judgment of the sense and substance of the apostolic teaching concerning fundamental matters of faith; so that, where the customary words, in which that teaching was usually delivered, were, in their judgment, misunderstood, they did not scruple to change, or enlarge them, by substituting others, or inserting, in addition, some clause explanatory of the meaning as they understood it. Thus, Tertullian, (in order, as it would seem, the better to control the doctrine of Hermogenes, who supposed that the world was made out of pre-existent matter), Tertullian, I say, has chosen to explain the customary words—"maker of the world"—by the addition, "who made all things out of nothing;" which explication I do not remember to have found in any other ancient account of the rule of faith, except Origen's Com. in Johan. T. xxxii. And the like proceeding may be observed also in other articles. So that, on the whole, it seems plain that these summaries, so far as they are not conceived in the very words of Scripture, cannot be certainly proved to contain anything more than the judgment or opinion of certain fallible men, concerning the meaning and substance of the apostle's doctrine, touching the fundamental

articles of faith. For which reason they cannot stand in the same rank of evidence as the writings of the New Testament, either as records of the Apostolic teaching in general, or as records of the particular Apostolic teaching concerning fundamentals. For, not only were the men, who report these summaries, liable to mistakes of the meaning of Apostolic teaching in general; but (still more) were they liable to this mistake,—of enlarging the extent of the fundamental articles, by affixing to the terms, in which they were expressed, the full plenitude of meaning which they knew, or supposed, to belong to them, in any part of the Apostolic teaching.

Now, these summaries of fundamental articles, or rules of the faith, are the only reports of Apostolic doctrine, besides the writings of the New Testament, which are attested by any open and general tradition of the early churches, capable of being compared, in any respect, with the evidence which the experience of mankind has taught them to require for the establishment of important historical facts. And yet it appears from the nature of the thing attested—(i. e., the sense or substance of oral speeches)—that the evidence, upon which these

rules depend, is not equal to the evidence upon which the writings of the New Testament are supported; besides that such short summaries cannot pretend to the multiplied confirmations of the direct testimony in their favour, which may be found to confirm the direct testimony in favour of the writings of the New Testament; such as internal characters of style—undesigned coincidences—fulfilment of prophecies, &c. So that, there seems to be no reason to doubt that the writings of the New Testament are more certain documents of Apostolic teaching than these summaries, and as such must be allowed to control and to correct their testimony.

It is proper also to observe that, since the early writers are always, upon fit occasions, forward to claim in distinct and explicit terms, an open and general testimony of the churches to the Apostolic origin of these traditions;—(i. e., the tradition of the Scripture, and of the rule of faith)—so, it is reasonable to suppose that, if they had known of any open and general testimony of the churches to any other Apostolic traditions, they would have been equally forward to claim it, in equally distinct and explicit language. And, therefore, the fact

that they do not make any such claims in other cases, is to be taken as a proof that they did not know of any other open and general testimony of the churches to any other Apostolic traditions.

Furthermore, since it is obvious, and indeed confessed upon all hands, that the form of this symbol was varied and enlarged by explications of its original meaning—it becomes of some importance to know what its original form was, and by what means the governors and teachers of the Christian church elicited these developments out of that original form.

Episcopus was of opinion (Inst. Theol. lib. iv., sect. ii., c. 34) that the original form of the symbol, in the Apostle's time, was simply this—I believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;—which form was adopted from our Saviour's own precept to baptize disciples into the name, or confession, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This form he supposed to have been gradually expanded by fuller expositions of the sense of those terms which were misunderstood by different kinds of heretics, until it assumed the various shapes in which we meet it in the ecclesiastical writers.

Dr. Grabe, in his annotations inserted after

the sixth chapter of Bull's *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*, has examined this opinion of *Episcopus* at great length, and has endeavoured to prove that all the articles of what is commonly called the Apostles' creed were explicitly contained in the formal confession, which the Apostles required of persons to be baptized,—except the articles concerning the descent of Christ into hell, and the communion of Saints.* This, I say, he endeavours to prove out of the writings of the New Testament. So that, if his proofs are sufficient, or so far as they are sufficient, the evidence of the Apostolic sanction of this form of the rule of faith is ultimately to be analyzed into the evidence of Scripture.

But, I suppose, some persons will feel some hesitation in admitting the sufficiency of Grabe's arguments.

If the point to be proved were this,—that the Apostles insisted upon many things, as fundamental articles of the faith, which are not explicitly specified in the short formulary which *Episcopus* supposed to be the original baptismal creed ;—if, I say, this were the thing to

* In the process of his argument, however, Grabe finds it necessary to allow that the article of the *Miraculous Conception* was not in the original symbol.

be proved, there can be no doubt that Grabe has proved it abundantly. But this, I apprehend, was not the thing to be proved. Episcopus never made any doubt that the Apostles taught a belief, for example, in Christ's death and resurrection, and in general in everything essential to a true notion of his office as Messiah, to be necessary to salvation, and he seems, all along, to have supposed that these things were implied, though not expressed, in a confession of the Son ; just as the various attributes of God are implied, though only his creative power is expressed in the first article of the common creed. There is, perhaps, no confession of faith upon earth, the terms of which were not intended to imply much more than they express explicitly ; and, so long as there is no considerable doubt or dispute about the extent of the implication of the terms used, men do not generally think it necessary to guard their meaning by careful explications. Now there seems to be no reason for supposing that, at first, the terms of such a simple form as that for which Episcopus contends, would have any other sense commonly put upon them than that which the Apostles, who originally propounded those very terms, declared to be

their true sense ; and, therefore, in such a state of things, such a simple confession as this might sufficiently serve as a symbol, capable of adequately distinguishing the Christian church from the Jewish and Pagan communities. But afterwards when other communities were formed, and separate congregations gathered, the members of which put a different sense upon the terms of this confession, from that which the Catholic church put upon them, and yet might retain the terms themselves,—then, a strong reason would arise for enlarging the symbol of the faith, by what the governors of the church judged to be a correct explication of those terms. For, though neither Jews nor Greeks understood by the term—the Father—any other person but him, whom the Apostles taught to be the maker of heaven and earth, yet we know that the Gnostic heretics understood the term otherwise : and, though neither Jews nor Greeks understood by—the Son—any other than our Lord Jesus Christ, yet we know that those same heretics did understand another person to be indicated by that same title.

Upon this view of the matter, it is evident that the explicated form of the creed could not date earlier than the gathering of separate con-

siderable heretical communities, while it will remain uncertain how much later its date is to be fixed than the rise of such communities; because the remedy is seldom applied until the evil has been some time in operation.

But, besides this question concerning the original form of the creed, there is yet a prior question, whether, in any form, it was used by the Apostles: and, though some considerations appear to make it probable that they might, yet there seem to be no certain means of determining that they did use a formulary of confession; for those who heard their instructions, and were converted by them, did, by the very act of demanding baptism, without any formal confession, sufficiently declare their belief of the doctrines delivered in those instructions: and the genuineness of the passage, Acts viii. 37, which is sometimes appealed to, in order to prove the use of a baptismal confession, seems to be very reasonably doubted by the critics.

But, however these questions may be determined, it is confessed that the rule of faith—whatever was its primitive form—was, at various times, enlarged and explicated; and the further question remains, What were the means of explication used by the governors of the church?

This question is of great importance, in estimating the value of the traditionary testimony to the creeds; because, in proportion as general reasoning, or the evidence of Scripture, were used in explicating the rule of faith, in the same proportion the rule, so explicated, must depend upon the support of such general reasoning, or Scriptural proof, and not upon pure testimony, properly so called. Now it is evident, from the writings of the early ecclesiastical writers themselves, that where the dispute is concerning the sense of the rule of faith, they draw their arguments from the general principles of reason, and from the express words of Scripture. This, I say, is evident from such treatises as that of Tertullian against Praxeas, and the Book of Novatian concerning the Trinity, which is a formal exposition of the symbol of the faith. Nor does there seem to be any sufficient proof that, in explicating the creed, the doctors of the church made use only, or even chiefly, of traditionary evidence: so that, upon a view of the scanty materials of the earlier times, we seem obliged to conclude that it is probable that, in explicating the sense of the creed, the governors of the church depended much upon arguments drawn from Scrip-

ture and from reason : which conclusion will appear the more probable, if we consider the mode of explication which Cyprian prescribes in the article of Baptism.*

“ As to what Stephen says—‘ Let no innovation be made upon the received tradition,’—I ask, whence is that tradition derived ? Does it descend from the authority of our Lord in the gospels, or from the injunctions and epistles of his Apostles ? For God declares that it is those things which are written that we ought to observe. If, therefore, this precept be contained either in the gospels, or in the Acts or Epistles of the Apostles, let it be observed Religious and simple minds have a short way of avoiding error and discovering truth : for, if we return to the very source and origin of what is delivered as divine, human error ceases ; and the true nature of the sacraments being clearly seen, whatever lay

* We have in Cyprian's works a report of the judgments of *eighty-seven* bishops assembled in council at Carthage upon this very point, who all (where they give any account of them at all) ground their judgments upon arguments from Scripture and reason. Compare also the epistle of the bishops at Antioch to Paul of Samosata, in which their reasons for believing the Son of God to have had a real personal subsistence before the incarnation, are all drawn from Scripture.

hid beneath the obscurity of a cloudy darkness, opens out into the light of truth. If an aqueduct, which heretofore gave a free and copious supply of water, were suddenly to check its stream, should we not repair to the well-spring, in order there to discover whether the fault lay at the fountain-head, or in the channel? Such is the duty of the priests of God, if they will obey the divine commands. If truth, at any time, receives a shock, and is brought into doubt, let us return to the source of our Lord's teaching, and that delivery of it which was made by the Evangelists and Apostles." (Epist. 74, ad Pompeium.)

Here it is evident, and generally confessed, that the word tradition, as here used by Cyprian, does not mean oral, but written tradition. *

However, in the famous case of that explication of the creed, which was made in the fourth century, at the Council of Nice, there are more abundant materials for forming a positive judgment.

The origin of the Arian controversy was this:—Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, assembled his presbyters and clergy, for the pur-

* See Suicer upon the word *traditio*.

pose of explaining to them his own opinion of the nature of the Son of God, and of hearing theirs. He had been moved to take this step by reports which he had heard concerning the teaching of Arius, one of his presbyters, who had been much valued by him on account of his abilities and skill in logic* (Soz. i. 15.) Arius was said to have taught that there was a period when the Son of God was not; that his substance was not like that of the Father; and that he possessed a free will capable of either evil or good. Upon the meeting of this assembly a conference took place, in which Arius and his opponents severally maintained their respective opinions. The dispute was dark and intricate; and Alexander himself remained for some time undecided, acting the part of moderator, and sometimes supporting Arius,† sometimes his adversaries. At last, however, he sided with the latter, declaring the Son to be perfectly like to, and co-eternal with the Father, and to this he commanded Arius to assent. Arius understood these words to

* Epiphanius (p. 729) says, that Meletius was the informer. Philostorgius (the Arian historian) attributes the quarrel to a certain Alexander Baucalis.

† Arius, in his letter to Alexander (ap. Epiph. p. 732), charges the bishop with having himself taught him his opinions.

infer *Sabellianism* (Socr. i. 5,) and therefore refused, in which refusal he was joined by several of the clergy and laity; whom, in consequence, Alexander proceeded to excommunicate. Hence began a great schism in the church, and warm disputes arose about matters which, Sozomon says, had never before been accurately examined (ut suprâ.) Alexander, provoked by this continued obstinacy, assembled nearly a hundred bishops of Egypt and Libya, and fulminated an anathema against Arius and his party (Ep. Alex. apud Socrat. i. 6.) Nevertheless other bishops, amongst whom Eusebius of Nicomedia was foremost, and many persons, distinguished by sanctity of life and intellectual ability (Soz. ut suprâ,) made no scruple of openly patronizing the excommunicated recusants. Alexander, therefore, deemed it necessary to write an encyclical epistle to the bishops of the universal church (Socrat. ut suprâ,) and a special one to the Bishop of Byzantium, giving a full account of his proceedings, explaining the nature of his opinions, and narrating the arguments which had been used in the controversy. The arguments, which are very many, and very subtle, are all drawn from Scripture and the principles of reason; as

may be seen, especially in the second of these epistles, as given by Theodoret (i. 4.) He thus guards his own doctrine from the charge of either Sabellianism or polytheism :—

“ When our Saviour says, I and the Father are one, he does not declare himself to be the Father, nor that natures, two in their subsistence, are one (τὰς τῇ ὑποστάσει διὰ φύσεις μίαν.) But that the Son is, by nature, such as to preserve the Father’s impress, retaining, by his very nature, a resemblance to him in all things, as being the invariable image of the Father, and the express character of the prototype. . . . And whereas they say that we teach two unbegotten beings; arguing unskilfully that we must either hold the Son to be made out of nothing, or else say there are two unbegotten things;—we answer that there is a wide interval between the unbegotten Father, and those things which he has created out of nothing; a nature* intermediate between which is the

* It is most manifest here, that φύσις cannot be used in the scholastic sense of *person*, i.e. a *modus*; because the question is about *natures* (δύο ἀγέννητα), and the things with which this φύσις is compared, on both sides, are not *two persons*, but a *person*, considered as to his *nature*, and the *generic nature* of created things. Alexander uses the term more than once, but always in the sense of *nature*. So below—πρόσθι τῇ γεννητῇ φύσει; and

only-begotten, by which nature, the Father of the word, created all things out of nothing; which nature was begotten of the self-existing (τοῦ ὄντος) Father himself." It is remarkable, that neither Alexander, nor Arius himself (Ap. Theod. i. 5,) nor Eusebius of Nicomedia (ibid. 6,) in the accounts which they give of the state of the question, at this stage of it, make any mention of the famous term *consubstantial* (ὁμοούσιον); and it would seem that, if Alexander actually used it, as Sozomen may appear to imply (ut suprâ,) he must have used it in the same sense as that in which we shall find presently Eusebius of Cæsarea consented to employ it.

The noise of the dispute had now reached the ears of Constantine, who was naturally alarmed to find the church, which he had just established, threatened, on a sudden, with a formidable convulsion. He addressed a long letter to both Alexander and Arius, in which he treats the matters in dispute between them as intricate subtleties, of no real importance, and scarcely intelligible to ordinary minds. Both, he says, are agreed upon all points of

τῇ τῶν λογικῶν φύσει; and p. 11, φύσεως ἀτρέπτου.... φύσει
ἕως.... τῇ αὐτῇ τοῖς γενομένοις φύσεως. κ.τ.λ.

any practical moment, and therefore should not break communion, for the sake of trifling speculations. (Ap. Socr. i. 7.)

But the disputants themselves took a different view of the importance of their controversy, and the emperor found himself compelled to assemble a general council of the governors of the church, to arbitrate between the contending parties. Upwards of two hundred bishops, besides presbyters and deacons, were collected at Nice in Bithynia; lay dialecticians also and philosophers flocked to the assembly, to be employed as advocates in supporting the contending parties. (Soc. i. 8.) Before the opening of the council, Sozomen tells us, "the bishops assembled in private; Arius was sent for, and a conference held, in which they communicated their sentiments to each other. But the enquiry, as usual, becoming perplexed by different questions, some counselled that no innovation should be made upon the faith delivered down from antiquity, especially those whose simplicity of manners induced them to receive, without needless curiosity, the faith in the Deity. But others affirmed that it was not fit to follow the ancient opinions, without an enquiry into them; (*ἀβασανίστως*) and many of the

bishops who then assembled, and of their attendant clergy, being able dialecticians and expert in such methods of disputation, became distinguished in those conferences, and known to the emperor and his court; and from that time Athanasius, who was as yet but a deacon, and came along with Alexander his bishop, appeared to bear the principal part in the consultation about these matters." (Soz. i. 17.) It has been supposed that the second class here mentioned were the Arians, who pressed for an enquiry. I think if Sozomen had meant this, he would have described them less ambiguously; and I suppose that both the classes here spoken of were orthodox; of whom the former wished to introduce no new terms into the creed; while the latter pressed for an explication of its meaning, by the insertion of the clauses *ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* and *ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς*: * and

* Many of the orthodox disliked these terms, which were very obscure, and produced a thousand disputes about their meaning. "The word *homousion*," says Socrates, "gave great trouble to the Egyptians. In examining too curiously into its sense, they were plunged into mutual disputes. The whole matter was like a scuffle in the dark, for neither party seemed to know why they charged their opponents with blasphemy. Those who disliked the term said it tended to introduce the heresies of Sabellius and Montanus. The admirers of it, in turn, charged their adversaries with Polytheism.....Both parties agreed in the substance, yet (I know not why) could never be reconciled."—Lib. i. c. xxiii.

I am confirmed in this opinion by the account of this dispute given by Athanasius himself, who tells us that the bishops were, at first, desirous to express the doctrine concerning the Son in words taken from the scriptures, and acknowledged by all ; but that, observing the few Arians present, readily to assent to these, as thinking them consistent with their own opinions, they were compelled to explicate their meaning more clearly, by words not simply scriptural. (Ep. de decretis S. N. pp. 224—226, and ap. Theod. i. 8.) These words were the *ἰσοουσιον* and *ἐκ τῆς ὁμοίας*, which were never pretended to have been found in any ancient symbol, and of which the former had been condemned by the synod of Antioch, seventy years before ; and the latter had been distinctly reprobated by Origen. (Comment. in Johan. p. 306.) They had, indeed, been used by particular doctors in the third century, as Dionysius Alexandrinus and Theognostus ; but it is curious that from both these writers the Arians quoted such passages, that Basil is disposed to give up the orthodoxy of the former, and Photius that of the latter.*

* According to Ambrose, the hint of inserting the homousion as a test was taken from an incautious expression of Eusebius of

From this account, it seems evident that the Arians could not have been the party who pressed for farther examination. They were ready and anxious to subscribe the rule of faith as expressed in its customary and scriptural terms;* and, indeed, this desire to have a symbol which both parties could subscribe, appears to have shewed itself in every instance in which they had an opportunity of exhibiting it. But Athanasius, and the more clear-sighted of the orthodox disputants, perceived that this would not answer their purpose of expelling the Arians from communion, and therefore pressed for an examination of the sense in which those customary and scriptural terms were to be received.

In this state of affairs, the council was formally opened by a speech from Constantine; some words of which have been preserved by the historians. 'You have,' said he, addressing the assembly, 'the books of the evangelists and the apostles, as well as the oracles of the

Nicomedia. "Auctor ipsorum Eusebius Nic. epistolâ suâ prodidit, dicens: si verum Dei filium et increatum dicimus, homousion cum Patre incipimus confiteri. Hæc cum lecta esset epistola in concilio Nicæno, hoc verbum in Tractatu Fidei posuerunt Patres, quod viderunt adversariis esse formidini."—De fide ad Grat. l. iii. 7.

* See their creeds, and those of the Semi-arians, in Epiphanius.

old prophets, which clearly instruct us in whatever we ought to know. Let us, therefore, rejecting all contentious strife, receive from these the solution of our enquiries.' (Theod. i. 7.) Here we see that the emperor, who was certainly now on the orthodox side, plainly proposed the scriptures as the source of explication.

There is extant a valuable document—a contemporaneous epistle of Eusebius, of Cæsarea—giving a sketch of the ensuing course of the proceedings. Eusebius appears to have represented that body of the orthodox who were desirous of retaining the customary and scriptural expressions of the traditive rule of faith. Acting upon this principle, he laid the following memorial before the synod: "As we have received from the bishops before, when we were catechised and baptized, and as we have learned from the sacred scriptures, and as we have believed and taught, both as presbyters and as bishops,—so now also believing, we present to you our faith, which is this: 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the word of God, God of God, Light of light, Life of life, the only-begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, begotten

of his Father before all ages, by whom all things were made; who, for our salvation was made flesh, and conversed amongst men, and suffered and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again in glory, to judge the quick and the dead. We believe also in one Holy Ghost; believing each of these to be and to subsist,—the Father, truly Father,—the Son, truly Son,—and the Holy Ghost, truly Holy Ghost: as also our Lord said, when he sent his disciples to baptize, —Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ This creed was approved by all, as far as it went; but the emperor (instructed, of course, by the orthodox disputants) insisted upon its being enlarged by the insertion of the ‘*Ὁμολογίον*, and other peculiarities of the Nicene symbol. ‘Upon this,’ says Eusebius, ‘questions were raised, and answers given, and reason searched thoroughly into the meaning of the terms.’ In fine, upon finding that the bishops disclaimed any sense of these words which he deemed objectionable, and that the words themselves ‘had even been used by some ancient writers,’ he consented to subscribe to them, so interpreted as that by the term *not made*, he

understood it to be affirmed that 'the Son was not like the other creatures which the Father made by him, but begotten in an ineffable manner;' and by the term *consubstantial*, he understood that 'the Son resembled the Father in every thing, and was not of any other substance or hypostasis, but of the Father only.' (Apud Socr. i. 8.)

From this deduction it seems to me most probable that the method of explication chiefly used at the council of Nice was one which proceeded in the way of argument from scripture and reason; nor can I find that the terms of explication, or any terms obviously identical as to import, were ever pretended to be found in any document or oral speech, claiming, upon the face of it, an apostolic origin, and attested by respectable evidence.*

* Augustine, in Johan. Tract. xcvi. expressly says:—*Adversus impietatem Arianorum NOVUM nomen condiderunt*, cf. c. Max. d. iii. c. xiv. By which he must mean, that it was new as an *orthodox* term, for it was very commonly used by the *gnostics* long before. It is used in describing their principles, and arguing against them, by Clemens Al. more than once. Strom. ii. p. 392, *εἰ μή τις ΜΕΡΟΣ αὐτοῦ καὶ δημοσίους ἡμᾶς τῷ θεῷ τολμήσει λέγειν*. Cf. Str. iii. p. 510, *εἰ μή καὶ αὐτὸς αὐτοῖς δημοσίους λεχθείη*. So in the Epitome, Theod. p. 796, *τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὡς δημοσίον ἦν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*. So in the Epistle of Ptolomæus ap. Grabe Spic. ii. p. 79, *τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φύσιν ἔχοντος*

Now it is plain that where a conclusion is deduced from premises, the matter of which is reasoning and criticism, the evidence of that conclusion, over and above the apparent force of the reasoning and exactness of the criticism, must be ultimately resolved into the mere authority of those who deduced it ; and, so far as it stands upon the appearance of exact criticism, so far its evidence must be resolved into the evidence of that book, to which the criticism has been applied.

τὰ ὅμοια ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ὁμοουσία γεννᾷ. Cf. Origen. c. Heracl.
ibid. p. 114, ὁμοουσίους τινὰς τῇ διαβολῇ.

VIII.

THE early ecclesiastical writers did not suppose that the whole system of Christian divinity was contained in the creed or rule of faith, or that every thing which might be truly known and discoursed concerning the fundamental articles of the Christian religion is also an essential part of those fundamental articles. They appear to have recognized the distinction, drawn by the apostles, between the faith and the wisdom of the gospel, and to have insisted largely upon that distinction. Irenæus, for example, having delivered the rule of faith, and explained its simplicity and immutability, proceeds thus to expound the nature of that wisdom which admits of greater and less degrees of proficiency in its mysteries. 'But greater or less proficiency in knowledge consists not in a change of the fundamental principle, or the invention of a different god from the Creator, and Maker, and Sustainer of this universe, (as if he were

not sufficient) or of another only-begotten Son; but it lies in the laborious investigation of parabolic speeches, and in accommodating them to the fundamental principles of faith; and in the exposition of the whole dispensation and œconomy of God, undertaken upon man's account; and in clearing the long-suffering of God in the apostasy of the transgressing angels, and in the disobedience of men; and in declaring the reasons why one and the same God made some things temporal and some eternal—some heavenly and others earthly; and why God, who is invisible, appeared to the prophets, not in one form, but under different forms to different persons; and in interpreting why more covenants than one were made with mankind, and in teaching what are their respective characters, and in searching out the cause why God concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, and in discovering why the word of God became flesh and suffered, and in making known why the coming of the Son of God took place in the last times, (i.e. why the beginning came in the end,) and in expounding whatsoever is contained in the scriptures concerning the end and future events, and in telling why God has made the reprobate

Gentiles fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers with the saints, and how this mortal flesh shall put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption; and how God shall "call them My people, which were not my people, and her beloved, which was not beloved;" and how "the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." For concerning these and the like questions, the apostle exclaims: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." (Iren. adv. Hær. lib. i. c. 4.)

It is very observable that Irenæus, who had just before claimed, in express terms, a general and open tradition of the rule of faith, pretends here not only no general and open tradition, but absolutely no tradition at all, concerning these questions; so that his silence would lead us to suppose that he knew nothing of any large system of theology, or of interpretations of scripture, over and above the baptismal creed, handed down, by any sort of tradition, from the apostles. Elsewhere, however, he makes mention of some particular and private traditions, which seem to belong to this class of topics, which I have called the wisdom of the

gospel. For example, in the 45th chapter of his fifth book, he relates the substance of a long discourse which, he says, he heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from certain persons, who had seen the apostles; the object of which discourse is to enforce this canon, that wherever scripture blames the misdeeds of any of the saints, we should be satisfied with its censure of them, and not add ours; but that, wherever scripture does not blame their misdeeds, there we should look for some type of Christ and his church, in the flagitious actions of those saints.

I suppose there are few, accustomed to consider and to weigh the value of evidence, who will be disposed to admit the apostolic authority of a canon so improbable in itself, upon the ground of evidence so vague and uncertain as that which Irenæus here specifies. For we do not know who this certain presbyter was, nor who his informants were, nor how he knew that they had seen the apostles, nor in what form they had intimated that this canon was delivered by the apostles, nor whether, in fact, they had ever said so at all; nor can we well estimate how likely the presbyter was to understand them aright, nor how likely they were

to understand the apostles aright. And our hesitation will be the more increased, if we reflect upon other reports, which Irenæus has made upon private traditionary evidence. For instance, in the 39th chapter of his second book, he undertakes to prove that our Saviour lived to be upwards of forty years of age, or even more than fifty ; and he says that not only his gospel, but also all the elders, who were in Asia with John the disciple of the Lord, attest that John had delivered this as a truth ; and some of them, adds he, had seen not only John, but other apostles also, and heard the same thing from them.

Now most persons, I suppose, will agree that no such conclusion as this can reasonably be deduced from the gospel of John, nor from any other gospel, but rather the contrary ; so that it is not at all unlikely that he who so manifestly mistook the meaning of the written gospels, may have equally mistaken the meaning of the report of what the Asiatic elders reported, concerning the oral tradition of John and the other apostles. And it is remarkable that Clemens of Alexandria, and Tertullian (writers of nearly equal antiquity with Irenæus) run into the very error of those heretics whom

Irenæus censures in this place, viz. the error of supposing that Christ preached but one year, (Clem. Alex. Strom. i. p. 340. Tertull. ad. Judæos. c. 8.) and that Clemens, in particular, uses the very argument which these heretics also made use of, to confirm his opinion. These considerations are fit to make us doubt whether Irenæus was a very careful judge or accurate reporter of private apostolical traditions.

Irenæus tells us also that the presbyters (or old men) who were disciples of the apostles, had said that Enoch and Elias were translated into the garden of Eden; (lib. v. c. 5.) but as he does not expressly say that these presbyters (whoever they were) were taught this by the apostles, I am uncertain whether or not we should reckon it among his traditions.

Irenæus also reports, upon the credit of Papias,* a remarkable tradition of our Lord's discourses concerning the millennium; which, he says, certain presbyters heard from St. John's own mouth, but which I forbear to set

* So I understand him to mean: but others think that Papias is cited as an independent witness, laying great stress upon the *KAI. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ*. Whereas I think that *καὶ* is to be construed with the *καὶ* which followed, in the clause translated *et adjecit dicens—καὶ ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ..... καὶ ἐπεθῆκε λέγων*.

down. They may be found in the 33rd chapter of Irenæus' fifth book. Irenæus says that Papias himself was an auditor of John—i.e. as the context would lead us to suppose, of the apostle John; but, if this be Irenæus' meaning, there is good reason to think that he was mistaken. For Papias himself, where he professedly describes the materials from which his reports of apostolical tradition were derived, makes not the least pretence of having himself seen or heard any of the apostles, but refers only to the information of presbyters (or old men) who had enjoyed that privilege. We have no means of knowing who these seniors were, nor how far either their intelligence or fidelity can be safely depended upon; nor do we know much more of Papias himself; only Eusebius, the historian, who had read his books, assures us that he was a man of very mean understanding; and it must be owned that nothing can be more unlike the manner of our Saviour's discourses, as related by the four evangelists, than the discourse which Irenæus has quoted out of the writings of Papias.

If we compare this last passage of Irenæus with the former passages concerning private traditions, which I have before quoted, we shall

see, I think, such a resemblance in the words, in which the source of the information is indicated, as will lead us to believe that they all come from the same quarter—i.e. from Papias; and, consequently, that whatever considerations destroy or impair the credibility of any of them, have a tendency to impair the authority of them all. This much is evident, that the credit of these traditions must bottom itself upon the credit of such of those seniors as related them to Papias, and the credit of those seniors must bottom itself upon the judgment of Papias, which (in Eusebius' opinion) was a very poor one.

There is no one of the ancient Christian writers, who have come down to us, that has insisted more largely upon the distinction between faith and wisdom than Clemens of Alexandria.

'The apostle,' says he, 'distinguishing it from the perfection which is by knowledge, (*γνωστικῆς τελειότητος*,) calls the common faith, sometimes the foundation, and sometimes milk, writing thus: Brethren, I could not speak to you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat. . . . As a wise master-builder I have laid the foundation, and another

buildeth thereupon, gold, silver, precious stones. These are the edifice of knowledge raised upon the basis of the faith in Jesus Christ.' (Strom. v. 557, 558.)

And again:—'Deservedly did the apostle say, By revelation was made unto me the mystery . . . which, in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to the holy apostles and prophets. For there is a certain learning also of the perfect, concerning which he writes to the Colossians in these words: We cease not praying for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. . . . And again: According to the dispensation of God, which is given me for you, to fulfil the word of God, the mystery which was hid from ages and generations, but which is now revealed to his saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles. So that the mysteries, concealed until the time of the apostles, and by them delivered as they had received them of the Lord—these are one thing;—the things, I say, hidden in the Old Testament, which are now manifested to the saints; but the riches of the glory of this mystery

among the Gentiles—i.e. the faith and hope in Christ, which he elsewhere calls the foundation ; these are another thing.’ (p. 576, 577.)

Clemens here seems to make a very manifest and gross mistake of the apostle’s meaning ; but I quote him only to prove a fact, not to supply an interpretation. Again :—‘ If then milk is the proper food of infants, but solid meat of the full-grown ; by the term milk will be understood the Catechesis, which is, as it were, the first nourishment of the soul ; but by that of meat, the perfect view of the mysteries. (ἰποκτικὴ θεωρία.) ’ This is the flesh and blood of the word—i. e. the knowledge of the divine power and essence.’ (p. 579.)

Here, we may remark by the way, Clemens gives evident signs of having changed his opinions, after writing his *Pædagogus*—a change of which learned men have supposed that they found symptoms in other places also. For if any one will compare the 6th chapter of his first book of the *Pædagogus*, especially at page 100,* he will see that Clemens there utterly

* The only way I can think of for reconciling the two places is to suppose that *all* Clemens means in the *Pædagogus* is, that the *perfect* doctrines are not new things, different essentially from the *milk* of the faith, but the same in substance, though in a more

rejects the opinion that the flesh and blood of Christ mean solid meat for the perfect, as distinguished from the milk for babes. Indeed, it seems very difficult to reconcile the whole tenor of that chapter with this fifth stroma of Clemens; as any attentive reader, who compares them both, will easily perceive.

Again:—‘Faith is a certain interior good, which, without philosophical enquiry, acknowledges God to exist, and glorifies him as existing. . . . Faith then is a compendious knowledge of necessary articles; but knowledge is a firm and stable demonstration of those things which have been received by faith, by the Lord’s instruction, built upon faith, advancing them to a sure, and scientific, and intelligible form.’ (p. 732.)

The method of this demonstration he explains elsewhere, thus:—‘The demonstration which we use is the only true one, being supplied from the holy scriptures, and what the apostle calls the wisdom taught of God. . . . This supreme demonstration inspires a scien-

scientific form. So Augustine—“*Ex ista fidei confessione, quæ breviter symbolo continetur, et casualiter cogitata lac est parvulorum, spiritaliter autem considerata et tractata cibus est fortium,*” &c.—*Enchirid.* c. 116.

tific faith, by the quoting and opening up of the scriptures.' (Strom. ii. p. 381.)

And again:—' We recognize them as the most excellent knowledge of the truth of that investigation which proceeds in harmony with faith, and is built on the foundation of the faith. . . . For we allege this unquestionable principle, that it is God who speaks, and appears in the scriptures to decide concerning every single subject of our enquiry.' (v. p. 547.)

On the whole, it would appear that by knowledge, as distinguished from faith, Clemens understood the speculative rationale of religion,* and that he believed it to be drawn solely from the comparison and exposition of the scriptures; and he expressly declares that the canon, according to which the scriptures are to be expounded, is ' the harmony of the law and the prophets with that covenant which was delivered by our Lord himself.' (vi. 676.)

However, it is to be observed, that though

* " Après avoir considéré, avec toute l'attention dont j'ai été capable, ce que c'est que cette science secrète...je n'ai pû y découvrir autre chose, que la science des mystères du Vieux Testament, c'est-à-dire les vérités secrètes qui étoient renfermées dans ces livres, et la Divinité du verbe, ses opérations, et en général ce qui concerne ce que l'on a nommé la Théologie."—Beausobre, Remarques sur le N. T. p. 34.

this scientific theology is to be wholly derived from scripture as its source, yet Clemens supposed that the science so derived, or at least the method of deriving it, had come down to him, by a secret tradition, conveyed through a few hands from the apostles.

In order that we should be enabled to estimate the degree of credit which it is proper to allow to this tradition, it is fitting that we should consider the account which Clemens has given of the mode of its transmission; especially as he is the only early ecclesiastical writer who has made any mention of it.

‘My present work,’ says he, ‘is not a piece of writing artificially elaborated for the purpose of display, but I store up in it memorials against old age—a remedy for oblivion—a sort of image and outline of those vivid and animated discourses, and those blessed and truly famous men which I have had the privilege to hear. Of these, one was a Grecian, from Ionia; others from Magna Græcia; another from Syria; one from Egypt, and others from the east: of whom, one was from Assyria and the other from Palestine—a Hebrew of an ancient race. But falling in with the last teacher in Egypt (the last in time, though in ability he was

before them all) I rested there. . . . These, preserving the true tradition of the blessed instruction, in a direct line from Peter, and James, and John, and Paul—succeeding as son to father—(but few sons are like their fathers)—came down, by God's blessing, even to us, charged with the deposit of these ancestral and apostolic seeds.' (Strom. i. 275.)

And again :—' This is that knowledge which has come down from the apostles, delivered orally only to a few.' (v. 645.)

It seems to be generally allowed that Pantœnus was the instructor whom Clemens describes as his last and most eminent teacher. Now Pantœnus was certainly alive in the third century ; so that it is scarcely possible, in the nature of things, that he should himself have conversed with the apostles ; neither does Clemens intimate that any of his instructors had themselves conversed with the apostles, and gathered this wisdom from their mouths ; which yet he would hardly have failed to do, if he had had any reason to believe that the case was so.

There are two links, therefore, in the chain of succession—i.e. two links at least—between Clemens and the source of this traditive knowledge ; and while we know scarcely any thing

of the nearer link, we know nothing at all of the farther one.

Now, it would seem that a tradition so circumstanced as this one—i.e. a private tradition, wholly oral, studiously concealed and transmitted through few hands; such a tradition, I say, requires, for the establishment of its credit, that we should know something of the character and capacity, and also of the nature of the testimony of those witnesses by whom it is conserved. Because such a tradition is, by its very nature, deprived of the safe-guards which publicity provides, and of the checks supplied by the separate evidence of numerous and independent attestors of the same thing. There are many points which it would be very desirable to ascertain concerning this tradition, and many questions, upon the answers to which the degree of credit due to it must depend, which yet we seem, I think, to have no means of answering satisfactorily.

It would be desirable to know, for example, in what form the original narrators testified to the apostolical origin of the tradition; and whether the belief of their disciples, in the apostolical origin of their reasonings from, and interpretations of, scripture, might not be grounded

rather upon a presumption of that origin, arising from the known fact of their masters having conversed with the apostles, than upon the direct and explicit testimony of those masters themselves.

It would also be very desirable to know to what extent they claimed apostolic authority for the wisdom which they delivered; and whether, for instance, the particular applications of certain principles of theology and rules of interpretation came directly from the apostles, or only the principles and rules, of which they themselves made such particular applications; and, in case only the principles and rules could be traced to an apostolic origin, then it would be farther desirable to ascertain how far these persons were competent to make a correct application of such rules and principles, and what degree of likelihood there might be of their (through mistake) abusing or perverting them.

It is obvious that the same questions recur again at the second step of the succession—i.e. that the same points arise with respect to Clements and his immediate informants, and their relation to their predecessors.

It would be also desirable to know whether

the secrecy and obscurity of the tradition was an explicit part of the tradition itself, or whether it was a conclusion drawn by Clemens himself, or his informants, from certain passages of scripture, (such as he has cited in proof of it) and the analogy of the esoteric doctrines of the philosophers, (which he has also alleged) and the fact that it had reached only a few, and those in obscure and mystical expressions.

Especially it would be desirable to know whether all—or, if not all, how much—of what Clemens has said in his *Stromata*, concerning those matters with which this traditive knowledge was conversant, can claim an apostolical origin. In this point, which is, at least, as important as any, Clemens appears to have given us no direction whatever; except it be in the intimation, which he has given us in several places, that this knowledge cannot and must not be explained in writing, but wholly trusted to oral communication; so that all that can be looked for in his works is obscure hints and enigmatical expressions of its mysteries. This, indeed, Clemens frequently intimates.

For instance, in his fifth *Stroma*, thus:—
“When I come,” says the apostle, “I will

come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ,"—i.e. he calls the spiritual gift or tradition of knowledge, which he longs to impart to them by his immediate presence, the fulness of Christ. . . . Reasonably, therefore, did Plato speak in his epistles: 'I must express myself to you in enigmas, that if my packet should miscarry by sea or land, he who reads may not understand.' Akin to which is the language of the holy apostle: Who is careful to preserve that prophetic and truly ancient method of concealment, by which the good instructions of philosophy were derived to the Greeks." (p. 579.)

And again, in his first Stroma, he tells us (p. 275) that mysteries are not to be trusted to writing, but to word of mouth; and that his own writings are only fitted to suggest their full meaning, upon points relating to this traditive knowledge, to such as already understand it; for whom it may serve as a memorial to preserve these things in their minds, but not at all as a sufficient explanation to those who are strangers to the oral teaching of competent instructors; which, by the way, may serve to shew us the reason why Clemens' language, with respect to many important subjects (such

as the divine nature) has been complained of as contradictory and obscure.

On the whole, it would appear that, even if Clemens were not mistaken in supposing that the knowledge, which he had received from his instructors, was derived from apostolic tradition, it is yet scarcely possible that we, in this age of the world, should derive any benefit from it; since neither have we any clue to discover where it is that this knowledge is to be found in his works, nor if we had could we reasonably expect to understand it, when it was found.

It is to be remarked also, that although Clemens seems to consider an acquaintance with this traditive knowledge to be of excellent use for the right interpretation of scripture, yet his own interpretations of scripture are often such as, I suppose, nobody in our times could induce himself to receive as correct.* Thus he interprets that precept of our Saviour's—"What ye hear with the ear, that proclaim ye upon the house-tops,"—to enjoin, not the open publication of what they had been taught privately, but the private transmission of it, in lofty ex-

* See Note C.

6.) And he sometimes seems to have a full sense of the Mosaic laws ; he commends the epistle which bears the name of Barnabas, as containing the substance of the tradition of wisdom.

It is this tradition which makes it fit that we should be cautious in admitting claims to prior traditions, is, that almost all the heretics pretended such traditions ; as we see in the works of Irenæus ; he himself owns that Basilides, a disciple of St. Peter, as his successor, Valentinus, Theodas, who had succeeded St. Paul. (vii. 764.)

He was the pupil of Clemens, and his successor in the Catechetical chair at Alexandria. We might expect to find in him the fullness of this traditive knowledge. Origen is very full and careful in distinguishing the difference between faith and tradition. He makes no sort of claim to the authority of any traditive body of theology, but only of the rule of faith. Nay, he seems to be inconsistent with a belief in any such tradition. Thus, for the Prologue to his Treatise on the Christian Religion :

‘ We must know that the apostles, in preaching the faith of Christ, did most clearly deliver some things, even to those who seemed slow in the pursuit of divine knowledge ; that is, all those things which they believed NECESSARY ; leaving the reason of their assertion to be searched into by such as had obtained the excellent gifts of the Spirit, especially the word of wisdom and of knowledge. Concerning other things, however, they did indeed lay them down dogmatically ; but as to the mode or cause of them, they were silent, in order that studious men among posterity, lovers of wisdom, might have an exercise for their wisdom, wherein to shew the fruits of their genius.’

It appears to me that these expressions naturally lead us to conclude that Origen was not aware of any tradition of these things, which, he says, the apostles left to be searched out by studious men.

In the first chapter of that collection out of Origen’s writings, which was made by Basil and Gregory, and goes under the name of Philocalia, he treats very largely of this knowledge, and lays down several rules concerning it ; yet never pretends to the possession of any traditive information upon the subject.

I shall give a sort of abstract of Origen's discourse in that place.

He observes that the Jews rejected our Saviour, on account of the prejudices created by their adhering too morosely to the literal sense of the Old Testament. For a similar cause, he says, the heretics, finding human passions there ascribed to the Deity, and not perceiving that such modes of speech were of a figurative character, refused to believe that the God of the Jews was the supreme being ; while some simple and unlearned Christians fell into the contrary error of framing mean and dishonourable ideas concerning the attributes of the supreme. Yet, he says, even the most simple will acknowledge that there are certain mystical œconomies contained in the scriptures ; and will allow concerning many things that they relate to abstruse mysteries, of which, however, they profess their ignorance. Of this he gives instances in the history of Lot and his daughters, and other actions of the patriarchs, which seem to violate morality. In the case of the tabernacle also, and other parts of the Mosaic ritual, he says that most Christians recognize, in such things, a typical character ; though they are sometimes at a stand, and sometimes

go wrong, in fixing their exact typical import. Now, in Origen's opinion, this typical and mysterious character is not peculiar to the Old Testament, but is to be found also in the New; so that, in the interpretation of the gospels themselves, we need that spiritual illumination which was given to him who said, We have the mind of Christ, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. How much more, then, in the case of the Apocalypse and the apostolical epistles?

Since these things are so, he continues, and so many mistakes are continually committed, one should not hastily suppose that they understand thoroughly words which require to be unlocked by the key of knowledge; which key our Lord declared to have been taken away by the scribes. Whereupon Origen takes occasion to press those who denied that those who lived before our Saviour's advent had the truth amongst them, with this question: How the key of knowledge could be with those who, upon their hypothesis, were not in possession of books that contained the abstruse secrets of

knowledge, and the perfect mysteries? On the whole, he says, he will deliver the method which seems to him most proper for reaching the full sense of scripture; which method he takes to be indicated in the scriptures themselves; as where Solomon says, Write thou threefold in counsel and knowledge, [which is the Septuagint version of Prov. xx. 20.] According to this method, we must conceive a threefold sense of scripture; one, the obvious sense suitable to the edification of the simpler sort, which he calls the flesh of scripture; a second, more elevated, which he calls the soul; and a third, which he calls the spirit, and supposes to be that wisdom which St. Paul spoke only among the perfect.

God's principal scope, he conceives, in inspiring revelation, was to illuminate such as could penetrate through the words to the depths of their meaning, with a knowledge of those mysteries which relate to men—i.e. to embodied souls. But since a knowledge of the concerns of the soul cannot be obtained without a knowledge of the truth concerning God, we must, in this sublime science, allot the first place to questions concerning God and his only-begotten Son: What is his nature? in what

sense he is Son of God ? what were the causes of his condescending to human flesh ? and becoming, in every way, a man ? Also questions concerning the nature of souls, the creation of the world, the fall of angels, and the origin of evil, &c.

Such was the principal scope of Revelation. The secondary aim was, to involve these high mysteries in edifying historical narratives and plain discourses, suited to the capacities of those who were not fit to comprehend the sublimer science. But, because there was danger lest in this way the higher meaning should be wholly overlooked, God was pleased to introduce difficulties and inconsistencies into the literal sense, in order to stimulate man's activity in searching for a mystical signification.

Here it is to be remarked, that Origen's subject was, in every way, fit to lead him to mention an apostolical tradition of the interpretation of scripture, if he had known of the existence of any such thing ; for he acknowledges the prevalence of great, and even dangerous diversities of opinion in the church, concerning the sense of the sacred writings ; and his design is to provide a remedy for these diversities, by laying down correct principles of

interpretation. These principles he builds upon a false and very obscure translation of a text in the Book of Proverbs, which he evidently misunderstands, and which seems to have no more connexion with his principles than any other text, taken at random out of the Bible. Is it reasonable to suppose that, in a matter of so much importance, he would not have made some allusion, at least, to the better foundation of a credible and well-authenticated apostolical tradition, if he had been able to produce such a tradition?

There is a remarkable passage in Origen's Reply to Celsus; in which he draws a distinction between the exoteric and esoteric teaching of the Christians. It is as follows:—

‘And whereas Celsus frequently calls our doctrine secret, in this also he exposes himself to a refutation; since nearly the whole world is much better acquainted with the preaching of the Christians than it is with the opinions of the philosophers. For who is ignorant of Jesus’ birth of a virgin, and his crucifixion, and his resurrection, (believed by so many) and the predicted judgment, which shall inflict deserved punishment upon sinners, by bringing a reward to the just? Yea, and the mystery of

the resurrection is understood, and commonly spoken of, and ridiculed by the unbelievers. It is monstrous, therefore, for Celsus to call our doctrines secret. But, as to there being certain esoteric points, which do not transpire to the vulgar,—this is a thing not peculiar to the Christians, but recognized also by the philosophers.' (Lib. i. p. 7.)

Here also it is to be observed that Origen speaks nothing of tradition; neither do I think that he has any where claimed traditive authority for any exposition of scripture. Neither, as far as I can find, do any of the early ecclesiastical writers make any such claim.

With respect to the later ones,—(who are of much less consequence, because a tradition that slept for three centuries can do little better, when it awakes, than tell its dreams)—with respect, I say, to the later ones, I shall only observe thus much :—that those who were undoubtedly the most able and learned amongst them, and have written professed commentaries upon both the Old and New Testaments, pretend to no assistance from traditive apostolical interpretations, in those commentaries; and that, whereas St. Augustine in particular has left us a just treatise upon the exposition

of scripture, and given many excellent rules for that purpose, he pretends to no other traditive guide in explaining the sacred writings, than the rule of faith or public creed of the church ; and it seems to me impossible,—or, at least, very hard,—to suppose that if he had known of other authentic rules and specimens of interpretation, he would not have mentioned them also.

It is thought, however, by some persons, that there is no other way of accounting for the agreement of the early ecclesiastical writers in certain interpretations, and certain principles of interpretation of scripture, than by the hypothesis of an apostolical tradition of those interpretations, or, at least, of the principles upon which they are founded ; and that although these writers themselves do not speak at all of any such thing, yet we must suppose the existence of a traditive system of interpretation, by which they were directed in their exposition of the Bible. But it appears to me that there are other causes, by means of which this appearance of unanimity may be accounted for, and accounted for naturally, without having recourse to any such hypothesis.

It is obvious to any one, who has at all

examined such matters, to observe that the first writers, or doctors of a rising sect, exercise a vast influence upon their successors ; and that their works become, as it were, a sort of mould, into which the minds of their disciples are cast, so as to assume the shape and likeness of their ideas ;—especially if the sect be one which, at least at first, does not contain many men of great literary gifts. Because, in such cases, the admiration which the less learned entertain for their apologists and instructors is the greater, and the credit of those writers the higher ; and, consequently, the current of opinion, against such as differ from them, proportionally the stronger. Besides, the successors of the first writers have, in most cases, been actually converted to the sect by the works of their predecessors ; or, if not actually converted by them, have at least derived from that source their principal information in the faith which they have adopted ; and, therefore, naturally conceive a certain love and veneration for the writings by which they are conscious of having profited ; which feelings prompt them to judge as favourably as possible of all the notions of their authors, and to submit as much as possible to their decisions. The first expositors,

too, of such a book as the Bible, which, being foreign—both in its subject, and its mode of treating the subject—from the turn of thought and fashion of writing that prevailed in Pagan literature, offered great difficulties to unpractised students of it;—the first expositors, I say, of such a book would have this considerable advantage, that their expositions would come in to the aid of minds much perplexed by many new difficulties; feeling themselves, as it were, strangers in a region unknown to them, and anxiously looking for some guide to direct their progress: and this advantage will appear the more considerable, if we reflect that the mode of exposition, actually adopted by the early christian commentators, was that mode which, in the times when they wrote, it was fashionable, among the religious philosophers of the Pagan schools, to apply to such writings as they supposed to bear a sacred or mysterious character, and which had also received the sanction of the cabalistical authors of the Jews; from which nation the first converts to christianity came, and to the writers of which nation men would naturally turn for information concerning the Old Testament.*

* See Note D.

These circumstances appear to me to afford a rational and probable solution of the phenomena, and such a solution as is confirmed by the analogy of what we see take place in almost all rising sects. But if any one is dissatisfied with this solution, and inclined to think the other more easy and natural, I would desire him to consider that, though that other solution may account sufficiently for the agreement of the early expositors, it is still only an hypothesis, framed in order to account for that appearance, and not supported upon any direct evidence ; and that it does by no means follow that, because that hypothesis sufficiently solves the phenomena, therefore no other hypothesis can solve them as well ; and that any hypothesis, which solves them sufficiently, stands upon precisely the same evidence as that which supposes an apostolical tradition. Besides, I would desire him to consider, that though that hypothesis may account sufficiently for the positive phenomenon of agreement amongst the early expositors, it does by no means account for the negative phenomenon of the absence of all claim, or even allusion, to the apostolical tradition which it supposes ; and this difficulty is increased, if we take in the consideration of other circumstances.

We should expect, for example, that if general consent were founded upon the belief of an apostolical tradition, when such a general consent was opposed by a particular writer, he would feel himself bound to shew that the belief upon which the consent was grounded, was an erroneous belief: yet we never find that this is the case. For instance, there is scarcely any interpretation of Scripture which can more properly be styled ecclesiastical, than that which explains the precept, "Cast not your pearls before swine," so as to forbid the exposure of the mysteries of religion to the profane. From this interpretation Methodius appears to have been the first dissentient. Yet, in confuting this, and endeavouring to establish his own interpretation, the possibility of there being an apostolical tradition in the case seems no more to have occurred to him, than if he had been arguing about the sense of a passage in Plato, or a symbol of Pythagoras. The reader will see this, if he turn to his words, as extracted by Photius, in the ccxxxv Article of his Bibliotheca (col. 932. *) Again, that interpretation of

* Where observe that the Latin version is miserably incorrect. The true meaning is pointed out by Valesius, in his notes upon Euseb. H. E. vi. 13. It is remarkable, that Basil also has de-

Gen. vi. 4, which interprets the phrase Sons of God, in that place, to mean angels, seems to have been universal among the christian writers of the three first centuries;—at least it has as much evidence for its universal reception by the church, in those ages, as any interpretation can be pretended to have. Yet, when Chrysostom and Theodoret set it aside as absurd and blasphemous, and treat its patrons as (in this case) madmen and fools, the notion of its being built upon an apostolical tradition could scarcely have occurred to them. To take a more critical case, the phrase Son of God, as applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and in the Creed, is said by Dr. Waterland, in the first two centuries, to have been scarcely ever expounded so as to refer to his eternal generation, but always so as to refer to some (figurative) generation in time; * yet, after the Arian controversies, it was almost universally expounded so as to refer

parted from the ecclesiastical interpretation, t. ii. p. 623. He thinks the precept forbids our causing the truth of our doctrines to be blasphemed by the licentiousness of our practice.

* This is expressly allowed by Dr. Waterland (Second Defence) of Ignatius (p. 283), of Justin Martyr (p. 284), Tatian (p. 289), Athenagoras (p. 290), Theophilus (*ibid*), Clemens Alexandrinus (p. 292), Hippolytus (*ibid*), Tertullian (*ibid*); nay, probably, of the Council of Nice itself (p. 287). See Note E.

to the eternal generation, even by those ecclesiastical writers who professed the highest respect for apostolical traditions, and were most willing to receive as good even very slight proof of their existence.

Besides, we should consider that a general agreement amongst the early ecclesiastical writers is often observable in cases where there seems to be no reason, from the nature of the matter agreed in, to suppose any apostolical tradition as the ground of their agreement. Thus, for example, it is not uncommon to find, especially in the Apologies, certain common-places (as it were) used by them all; and continuous tracts of argument, in the same order and coherence (whether against Pagans or heretics,) adopted freely from one another; and, in some cases, adopted ultimately from the heathen philosophers. Nor is this free use of other peoples' writings at all peculiar to the christians: it was common amongst the best profane authors of their age; as any one may see by comparing the various philosophic writers of the same school together, or the various writers upon natural history, antiquities, criticism, medicine, and so forth.*

* See *Thomasius de Plagio literario*; and compare the very

Instances of the same kind may be alleged in the general reception of such questionable documents as the fable of Aristeas, the Sibylline Books, the story of Ezra's repairing the law, &c., which can hardly be ascribed to any other source than the prevalent authority of some distinguished writer, from whom the rest thought themselves safe in copying.

On the whole, I cannot help concluding that we have no sufficient reason for supposing that the early christian writers were in possession of any traditive system of scriptural interpretation; and that, even if they were, we have no sufficient historic means of discovering where the genuine vestiges of that system are to be found.

curious extract from Porphyry, given by Eusebius, *Præp. Evng.* lib. x. p. 272. (ed. Steph.)

IX.

It seems to be supposed by some to be a valid objection to the account, which we have given of the relative authority of scripture and the creed, to say that the creed is older than the scripture, as being a summary of the apostles' oral teaching; which oral teaching must, from the nature of the case, have been older than their writings.

It is not of course meant by those who argue thus, that even the earliest written accounts of the rule of faith, which the uninspired ecclesiastical writers have transmitted to us, are older than the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists; but, what is meant, or, at least, what is all that can be colourably asserted, is, that the oral teaching, from which those accounts are supposed to have been gathered, was older than the writings of the New Testament. But now,

it is to be observed that the question, the true question to which this objection ought to be pertinent, is not about the certainty of the Apostles' oral teaching, but about the certainty of the *media*, by which we are to be informed concerning it: and, undoubtedly, the writings of the New Testament are faithful accounts and representations of the oral teaching of the Apostles (for they wrote no other doctrine than they preached) in a far higher sense than the reports of any uninspired narrators at second hand can possibly be pretended to be.

But the objection is sometimes stated in a form which gives it more logical pertinence to the real question. The canon, it is said, or complete collection of the writings of the New Testament, was not unalterably fixed until the fourth century: for, until that time, considerable doubts were entertained, within the church itself, concerning the divine authority of particular books; but the Creed, and even doctrines not in the Creed, were always and by all, from the very first, received as a true and adequate representation of the Apostolic teaching. Consequently the Creed and such doctrines stand, in this respect, upon better evidence than the canon of the New Testament.

Now, in the first place, it must be observed that the deficiency of proof, here complained of, in respect of the writings of the New Testament, concerns only a few particular books, and that there is nothing at all in the matter here alleged to prove, or appear to prove, that the books of the New Testament universally received stand, in any degree, on lower evidence than the rule of faith. Notwithstanding this objection, therefore, it will still remain established, that the books of the New Testament, universally received,—i. e., all the books of the New Testament, except the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse, or all the twenty-seven books except seven,—are higher evidence of the Apostles' teaching than the Creed, and consequently must control it, in all cases of common matter: and that all the matter of the Creed is common to the universally-received books of the New Testament—besides the obviousness of the fact—is evident upon the objector's own principles, because those who rejected the particular books here spoken of, never made any doubt that their imperfect canon contained all things necessary

to salvation. Besides, the four gospels and the acts of the Apostles undoubtedly form a part of the class of books universally received; and we have already seen that these alone contain everything that the Apostles delivered as essential to the faith.

Now, with respect to those other doctrines not contained in the Creed, it may equally be shewn that the objection really proves nothing against us. For, in reality, all that it proves is this—that, in the opinion of those who received certain doctrines, such as the doctrine of original sin and the mystery of the Eucharist—and yet doubted the authority of certain books, the evidence for the Apostolic origin of the doctrines was stronger than the evidence for the Apostolic origin of the books. . But the testimony of a great majority (though less than universal) to the authenticity of a book is more valuable than even an universal judgment in favour of an opinion. Because men, in the gross, are far more competent judges of a matter of fact, than of a point of speculation. Besides, in order to make the objection of any sort of weight, it should be made to appear probable, that the supposed universal consent of the church, (which is again inferred from

the general agreement of certain early doctors of the church, the existence and sense of which general agreement is hotly contested amongst learned men,) I say, it should be made probable that this universal consent (supposing it to exist) was not founded upon those documents of Scripture, which were then universally received. If these doctrines be not sufficiently taught in the books universally received, then the objectors, upon their own principles, must hold that the party doubting the authenticity of the other books of Scripture, could have had no sufficient warrant for their faith in those doctrines. Because, if tradition prove anything, it proves this, that all doctrines must, in some way or other, be shewn to be contained in the Scriptures. But, if the universal reception of these doctrines were only the consequence of the universal reception of certain writings of the Apostles, this will never prove the tradition of doctrine more certain than the tradition of Scripture. It will only prove (what was never denied) that there is greater evidence for some books of the New Testament than for others. In a word, if it be granted that the universal consent, here pretended, was grounded upon the books universally received — then,

even though we admitted, that it brought a higher testimony to those doctrines for which it can be alleged, than we can produce for two or three books of Scripture—(which, however, we by no means admit)—still, it would not bring a higher degree of evidence to the doctrines than it brought to the books, nor so high : and, consequently, these doctrines would still be liable to be tried and controlled by those universally-attested documents. For, to argue that certain doctrines must needs be in certain books, though nobody by reading can find them there, is a sort of reasoning that no one, I suppose, would choose to admit in any ordinary matter.

In the second place ; because this question of the settlement of the canon of the New Testament is one of great importance many ways, it will be proper to consider it somewhat carefully.

The prime medium by which the genuineness and authenticity of the writings of the New Testament is ascertained to us, is the consentient testimony of those who received those writings immediately from the Apostles : the testimony of others is merely subordinate, being of value only as it infers and supposes

this testimony. Hence it appears that the nearer we approach, in point of time, to this testimony, the more weighty the evidence becomes; and that the only way in which a lack of later testimony or the appearance of later counter-testimony can diminish the evidence, is by weakening or shaking the force of the inference by which we are led to the prime medium.

Now, in the case of the seven books of the New Testament which are said to be supported by less evidence than the other twenty—it is not pretended that there is direct evidence of their not being generally received in the first and second centuries:—on the contrary, they are freely quoted as genuine and authentic parts of the New Testament, by such of the earliest ecclesiastical writers as have come down to us. So that, judging only from the extant remains of contemporary writers, there would seem to be no doubt in the matter. But the ground of doubt is this: that, in the third and fourth centuries, certain ecclesiastical writers either rejected or hesitated to receive them.

Now this, it is proper to observe, does by no means necessarily infer that they were not previously received by the general consent of Christians: because it does not appear that the

doubts of these writers were originally grounded upon the defect of external testimony ; but it is very probable that they were in all cases, and certain that they were in some, built only upon critical arguments, and supposed errors in those books. Upon this state of the case it would be as wrong to argue that the Apocalypse was not generally received in the second century, because it was doubted in the third, as it would be to argue that the Gospel of John was not generally received in the Lutheran churches in the sixteenth century, because it was doubted by Dr. Bretschneider in the nineteenth. And if, as it appears most likely, the dissent of those particular writers, who doubted or rejected the books in question, from the judgment of the majority of Christians, was founded upon critical and theological arguments, then the value of their dissent, as a subordinate medium for rendering doubtful the general consent of the immediate witnesses to the authority of those books, is wholly resolvable into the value of those critical and theological arguments upon which their dissent was founded. So that, upon this view of the case, it is not the two quantities of external testimony — for the doubted books, and for the Creed—that are to

be compared together ; but the thing to be determined is, whether the value of certain internal difficulties, in the doubted books, is so great as to affect the direct evidence of their genuineness and authenticity—i. e., whether the evidence of Apostolic origination, derived from the universal reception of the Creed, be greater than the evidence for the authority of those books, diminished by the value of these internal difficulties.

What has been said already will assist us the better to apprehend what I shall say, in the third place, concerning this objection ; which is, that, where an argument is founded merely upon a difference between the quantities of two bodies of testimonies, it supposes that the quality of both is homogeneous. But, in the present case, the quality of the evidences compared is not the same : because, the evidence in favour of the doubted books of the New Testament, if (although not so full as it might be) it yet places their authority beyond the reach of reasonable challenge,—ascertains for us the genuineness and authenticity of documents immediately emanating from the Apostles themselves ; whereas, the testimony to the Creed cannot do more than ascertain to us the

sense which was put upon the words immediately emanating from the Apostles themselves ; and, therefore, however full, must stop short at a remoter point than the testimony to the books : so that any proof, which adequately proves the genuineness and authenticity of the books, proves as adequately, that they are in their nature a more certain record of Apostolic teaching than the Creed.

Besides, the objectors themselves allow that the Creed received several successive and various forms, according as its meaning was more and more explicated by the governors of the church, in different ages : so that each new explication must depend upon the judgment of the age, in which it was introduced, as evidence that it was the sense of the teaching which the men of that age received from their fathers : all, therefore, that their successors could really attest is, that such explications were delivered to them, by their predecessors, as what those predecessors judged and believed to be the true meaning of the doctrine which had been delivered down to them : so that, not only at the first original, but at every successive explication, there was matter of judgment and opinion introduced into the chain of evidence ; the

links (as it were) of that chain being not all made of the same substance, but partly of proper testimony, and partly of authority. Now, of such a chain, it is evident, the whole cannot be stronger than its weakest part.

But still, it is said, when we find doctrines taught publicly and generally in the church, at a time when the books of the New Testament were not generally diffused, nor any canon of them collected, we must suppose such teaching to be founded upon oral tradition; and the unanimity of that teaching, at so early a time, is a sufficient proof that it is a correct representation of that teaching.

To this I answer,

First, that I know no direct medium for proving the existence of any teaching, so circumstanced as that described in the objection, except the writings of the New Testament themselves: since I believe that, at the date of the earliest compositions of uninspired ecclesiastical writers, the books of the New Testament were generally diffused, and some canon of them fixed. My reasons for which belief are these—

Not only ecclesiastical history, but the manifest internal evidence of St. John's Gospel itself

assure us that St. John had seen and examined the works of the other three evangelists, and wrote his gospel as a supplement to complete the collection. This seems to argue a very early settlement of the canon of the gospels. St. Peter (2 Pet. iii. 15) makes distinct reference to all Paul's Epistles, under the title of Scripture, as to a class or sylloge of writings well known to the churches. This seems to argue a very early settlement of a canon of St. Paul's Epistles.

The letters of Ignatius, one of the earliest ecclesiastical documents now extant, not only make direct quotations from St. Paul's writings, but as to their frame and composition, are almost wholly tessellated (as it were) out of phrases and expressions taken from those writings. This seems to argue a very great familiarity with St. Paul's Epistles, as a complete collection.

Immediately after the death of Ignatius, Polycarp took care to form a complete collection of his letters, and publish them among the churches; and I cannot believe that less care was taken in the case of the inspired Apostles and Evangelists: especially as Ignatius himself writing (as I think Lardner has shewn) so early

as A.D. 107, speaks of the Gospel and the Apostles in a way that clearly indicates two well-known collections of sacred writings. (Ad Philadelph. sect. 5.)

So early as A.D. 127 we know that Marcion the heretic undertook to collect a rival Apostolicon, or canon of the epistles, which seems to imply the previous existence of an orthodox canon. The old Peshito-Syriac version of the New Testament seems to have been executed, at least before the middle of the second century, (Hug's *Einleitung*, &c., sect. lxviii.) and it is manifest that a translated canon supposes a prior collection of original documents: for, it is not until books are well-known and recognized by those who understand the language in which they are written, that they are translated into a strange language.

Nor do I see any appearance of valid objection, to be set against the conclusion, to which these considerations appear to lead.

Secondly, unanimity of consent is often a most insecure ground, upon which to build an hypothesis of Apostolic tradition. For this unanimity is often produced by the prevalence of a certain general predisposing cause in the mind of men, which leads them to understand

particular forms of expression in the same (although it may be wrong) sense, and draw the same (although it may be wrong) conclusion from similar premises. Thus, for example, when philosophy is applied to dogmatic religion, the prevalence of a particular school of philosophy will produce a consent in the general results of the application; as we see in the theory of *Æons*, and the eternity of matter, which pervaded all the gnostic sects. So, when the philosophy of Leibnitz and Wolff prevailed in Germany, the doctrine of predestination began to be received by the Lutheran churches. And it would seem that the doctrine of religious celibacy, and other doctrines, may be traced to similar philosophic prejudices in the early church. Besides, there are original principles of human nature which, under particular circumstances, develop themselves always according to regular and uniform laws. From these principles spring the tendencies to polytheism, idolatry, ceremonies, sacrifices, and secret doctrines, which—in the church, and out of it—in all places, and at all times—have preserved a surprising uniformity in the various modifications of superstition. A custom or tenet, which is in accordance with these, dif-

fuses itself almost instantaneously through the prepared medium, like a spark shooting into inflammable vapours.

Thirdly, the objection now urged seem to be founded on a mistake of the state of the question: for, the question is not, now, whether uniformity of early teaching does not raise a good presumption of its Apostolic origin, but, whether it can raise *so strong* a presumption of it as to overbear the evidence of the plain sense of the written monuments of Apostolic teaching; or so strong a presumption as to prove that something *is* expressed in those monuments, which plainly is *not* expressed in those monuments.

X.

It has also been urged as a valid objection against the sufficiency of scripture alone, interpreted by the ordinary rules of criticism, to be a certain means of ascertaining the nature of apostolic doctrine, that the words of scripture may bear many meanings, but that one only of these meanings could be intended to be its true sense, and that, therefore, we must look for some guide, out of scripture, to direct us to the actual meaning, amongst so many possible ones.

Now the apparent force of this objection (for it has been so often used that it must be supposed to have some apparent force) seems to lie in the ambiguity of one of the terms in which it is proposed. In one sense, words may bear any meaning at all; because they are mere arbitrary marks, the significancy of which

depends wholly on conventional usage. In another sense, words may bear any meaning which they have been ever, and under any circumstances, used to convey. In another sense, they may only bear that meaning which the context, peculiar circumstances, style, manner, custom of writing, and apparent drift of him who uses them shew to be probably intended in any given passages. If the objection takes the word *may* in either of the two former senses, it holds equally against the intelligibility of all propositions, expressed in words, whether oral or written, ancient or modern ; but, if it takes that word in the last sense, then what is alleged amounts to this—that the writings of the evangelists and apostles are of such a nature that, when searched with the greatest diligence and candor, and examined upon the best principles of criticism, they do not yield any one consistent meaning, but several meanings, each of which is just as probable as the other. Now, to allege this, without proof, is plainly to assume the matter in dispute, and to affirm that of the writings of honest men, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, which, if it be true of any other writings, is only true of such as have been composed either by knaves or idiots.

But then, it is said, the manifold important controversies, about the sense of scripture, shew plainly that it has not been so written as that private Christians cannot go astray, even in matters of moment, in understanding it; or that even the governors of the church shall never err in its exposition.

To which I answer that the thing alleged is very true; but that it seems somewhat unreasonable to expect any rule of faith or manners that should absolutely preclude the possibility of mistaking or perverting it. If it be allowed that the scripture is sufficient, when studied with care, humility, and candor, to inform all, even the most simple, in all things absolutely necessary to be known, and to inform those of higher abilities and attainments, still (as before) supposing proper care, humility and candor, in such other useful truths as God has seen fit to reveal,—then all is granted that we contend for. Nor is it at all contrary to the supposition that scripture is sufficient for this end, but rather perfectly consistent with that supposition, that when men of meaner abilities endeavour to judge of things which they are not competent to judge of, or when men of great abilities, but of perverted minds, apply their

abilities to the distortion of scripture, or fail in diligence or moral qualifications, such persons should frame wrong interpretations of the writings of the apostles and evangelists; since, under the same circumstances, they would be sure to frame wrong interpretations of any other writings.*

But, it is said, it is an easy thing to charge faults upon others, but a difficult one to prove the charge; that both parties, in a controversy, generally alike profess to be unconscious of any unfairness or incompetency in themselves; and that it requires something more than mere assertion to prove that either have not used due care and candor, or brought sufficient ability to the question.

To which I answer, that wherever there are sufficient objective means of information, and yet the information is not obtained, the failure

* "I doubt as little of the zeal of commentators as of the zeal of divines, and am as ready to believe of the passions and pride of mankind in general, that (did but the same interests go along with them) they would carry the learned world to as violent extremes, animosities, and even persecutions, about variety of opinions in criticism, as ever they did about religion; and that, in defect of scripture to quarrel upon, we should have French, Italian, and Dutch commentators ready to burn one another about Homer, Virgil, Terence, and Horace."—Pope to the Duke of Buckingham.

must arise from some subjective deficiency. Every one—that is, every one that I am concerned with in this question—will allow that there are sufficient objective means of information provided for us, in respect of every thing that God intended we should know; and, therefore, where we fail of knowing such matters, it must be through our own fault. So that it must either be contended that wherever there is a difference of opinion amongst men, the thing disputed is not necessary, or intended of God, to be known by the erring party; or it must be conceded that differences about a truth do not necessarily infer the want of objective certainty of information concerning that truth. Yet, in every case of difference, we find men on both sides making the same fair professions of candor and diligence, and, after all, continuing to differ still. In particular, in this very dispute concerning the ultimate rule of faith, there are innumerable differences of opinion, which it is unnecessary to reckon up, and good and learned men in each opinion; and yet, I suppose, no party—except the professed sceptics—will pretend that there are not sufficient objective means of determining that dispute. So also, in the question concerning the sense

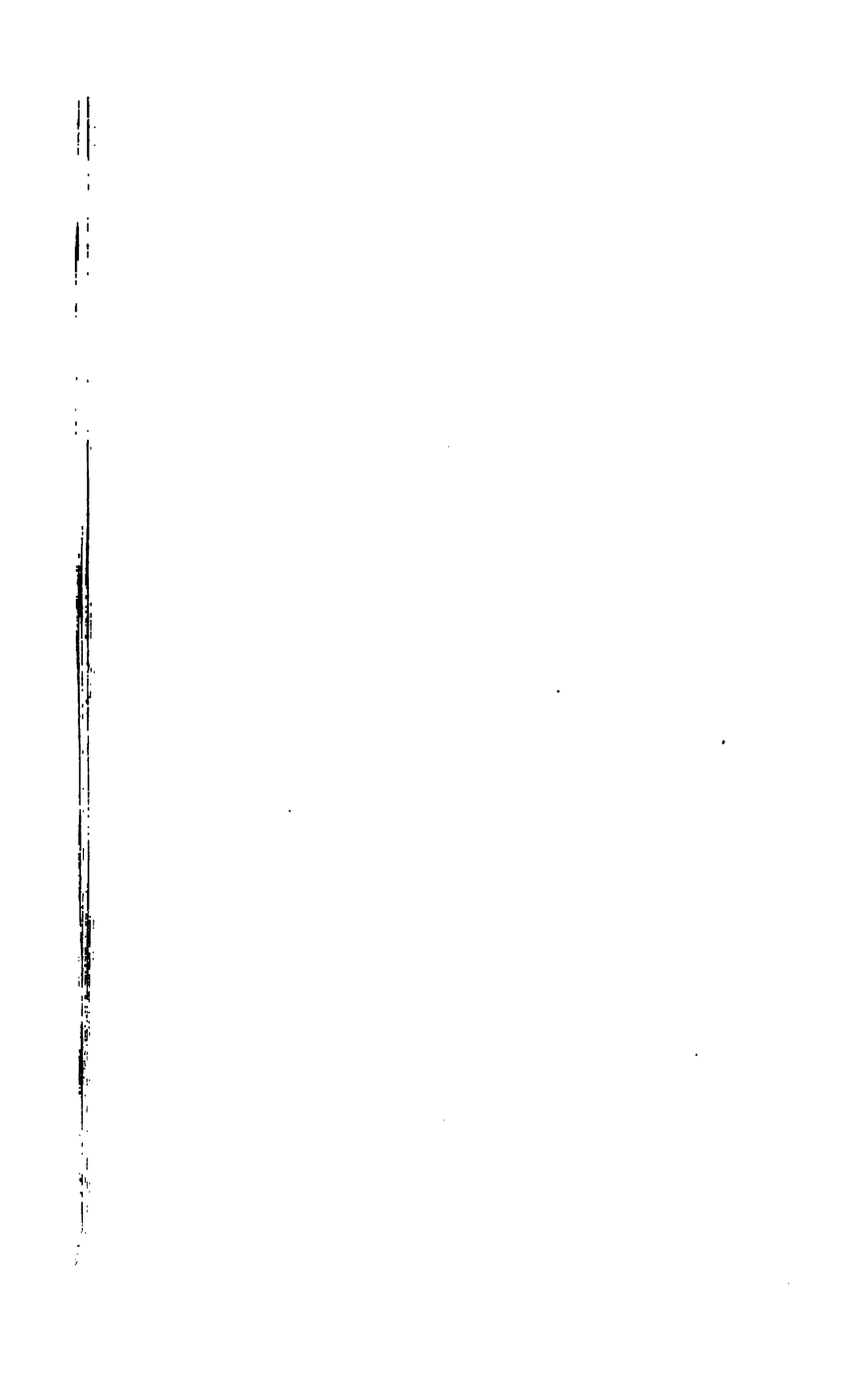
of tradition, it is notorious that there have been, and are, just as many differences of opinion as there are, or have been, concerning the sense of scripture. The Greeks, the Romanists, the Anglicans,—each contend that their sense of tradition is the true one; so do the Nestorians; so do the Monophysites; so do the Arians; so do the semi-Arians; so do the Socinians; so do the Pelagians; so do the semi-Pelagians; so do the anti-Pelagians; so do the Millennaries; so do the Allegorists. It is quoted for transubstantiation; it is quoted for consubstantiation; it is quoted to refute both. Mr. Dodwell cited it to prove the natural mortality of the soul; Dr. Clarke to prove the reverse: Pearson and Hammond say it establishes episcopacy; Blondel and Salmasius affirm it to be on the side of Presbyterianism, while Baxter and King think it clear for the Independent model. So that, on the whole, to claim that tradition should be added to scripture, as part of the rule of faith, is certainly to add one new controversy to those which would exist without such a claim; and yet not to do much more towards determining any.

But, after all, it is said to be idle to deny that that there are many things hard to be under-

stood in Scripture, which men are very apt to wrest to their own destruction, if they are left to their own judgment in expounding them; and that therefore it is quite necessary to have that judgment controlled by the sentence of some other authority. To which I answer,—necessary to what? to God's purpose, or to ours? If it be said, to God's purpose, then I ask, whence it appears to have been God's purpose that men should be thus saved from a danger which they incur through their own fault? And whether it is not very conceivable that God may have made the perspicuity of Scripture, as well as the evidence of Scripture, less full than it might have been, for this very purpose,—ut sic Sermo Evangelicus tanquam *Lydius* esset *Lapis*, ad quem *sanabilia* ingenia explorarentur.

In a word, it is plain that it was not God's purpose to secure unity, either of opinion or practice, absolutely in his church, but only conditionally; i. e. to provide such means as, when properly used, should be sufficient to teach men all things necessary to salvation, and instruct them to differ in other matters without breach of charity; but not to prevent them from neglecting, or misusing those means. If

the Scriptures have a sufficient degree of perspicuity to do this at all, it would seem to me to be a presumptuous way of arguing, to conclude that, because some other documents, if they could be absolutely relied upon, might do it with a greater degree of clearness, therefore God intended that we should absolutely rely upon those documents.



NOTES.

Note A. p. 79.

“SUCH whose design is to impose upon the minds of men with some cunningly-devised fables, love as much ambiguity as ever Apollo did, in his most winding oracles ; of whom it is said,

“ Ambage nexâ Delphico mos est Deo,
Arcana tegere.”

. . . . But never was christianity more dishonoured than when men brought it from its native simplicity and plainness, into a company of cloudy and insignificant expressions, which are so far from making men better understand the truth of it, that it was certainly the devil's design, by such obscure terms, to make way for a mystery to be advanced (but it was of

iniquity;) and soon after, we see the effect of it in another oracle set up at Rome instead of Delphos; and all the pretence of it was the obscurity supposed in Scripture. What! darkness come by the rising of the sun! Or is the sun at last grown so beggarly, that he is fain to borrow light of the earth? Must the Scripture be beholding to the church for its clearness, and Christ himself not speak intelligibly unless the Pope be his interpreter? Did Christ reveal to men the way of salvation, and yet leave men to seek which was it, till a guide never heard of in the Scripture came to direct them? What strange witnesses were the Apostles, if they did not speak the truth with plainness? How had men been to seek as to the truth of christianity, if the Apostles had not declared the doctrine of the gospel with all evidence and perspicuity? Whom must we believe in this case, the Apostles or the Roman oracle. The Apostles tell us they speak with all plainness of speech, and for that end purposely lay aside all excellency of words and human wisdom, that men might not be to seek for their meaning in a matter of so great moment; that the gospel was hid to none but such as are lost, whose eyes are blinded by the

god of this world : that the doctrine revealed by them is a light to direct our way, and a rule to walk by : and it is a strange property of light to be obscure, and of a rule to be crooked. But it is not only evident from the Apostles' own affirmations that they laid aside all affected obscurity, ambiguous expressions, and philosophical terms, but it is likewise clear from the very nature of the doctrine they preached, and the design of their preaching it. What need rhetoric in plain truths ; or affected phrases in giving evidence ? How incongruous would obscure expressions have been to the design of saving souls by the foolishness of preaching ! For if they had industriously spoken in their preaching above the capacities of those they spoke to, they could never have converted a soul without a miracle ; for the ordinary way of conversion must be by the understanding : and how could that work upon the understanding which was so much above it ?" (Stillingfleet, Orig. Sacr. B. ii. c. 9.)

Note B, p. 83.

IN his Seventh Book against Celsus, also, Origen has some excellent remarks, which I shall translate.

“ The prophecies have been committed to writing, and preserved, that succeeding generations might read and reverence them, as the words of God ; and, being profited not only by the reproofs and admonitions which they contain, but also by the predictions (the fulfilments of which convince us that it was the divine Spirit which foretold them,) might continue in the exercise of piety, and in obedience to the law and the prophets. The prophets indeed expressed, according to the will of God, without any sort of concealment, whatever it was profitable that their hearers should immediately understand, and such things as contributed to the correction of their morals : but such things as were of a more mysterious and abstruse nature, and belonged to sublimer speculations, above the understanding of the vulgar, these they wrapped in enigmas, and allegories, and what are called Parables and Proverbs ; in

order that they who will not shrink from trouble, but undertake any toil for the sake of virtue and of truth, might, by diligent enquiry, find out the sense, and when they had found it, might approve themselves good stewards of its riches (*οικονομήσωσιν*). But Celsus, like a man of spirit, seeming very wroth at not being able to understand such discourses of the prophets, proceeds to scold them in set terms; declaring 'that they spin out long threads of unintelligible and fanatical and utterly obscure nonsense; such as no man of sound understanding could possibly find a meaning in, being, in truth, mere darkness and vanity; yet such as afford a ready handle for any fool or quack, upon any occasion, to twist them in any direction that may chance to suit his purpose.' This he seems to me to have spoken with a malicious cunning, and through a design to turn away, as far as he could, those who might be inclined to explore and search into the meaning of these documents: and the whole thing is very like what happened, when, upon a certain prophet having come to a certain person and revealed to him what was about to happen, his companions asked, Why came this mad fellow to thee? It is very probable that there are

extant discourses, much more profound than mine, which are fit to shew the falsehood of Celsus in this matter, and to vindicate the inspiration of the prophets. Nevertheless, I too, to the best of my ability, have discharged this duty ; interpreting every sentence of these—as Celsus calls them—unintelligible, and fanatical, and utterly obscure writings, in my works upon Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and some of the twelve. And if God gives me success, in his own good time, I purpose to add to these whatever is yet deficient, or so much as I shall attain to the understanding of. Others too, if they will only search the Scriptures, may, if they are persons of understanding, discover the signification ; since there is, as Celsus says, much darkness in them,—but not vacuity. Nor can any fool or quack explain them, or twist their words as he will : but he only, and he certainly, who is wise in the truth as it is in Christ, can render a consistent account of the whole series and connexion of the obscure speeches of the prophets, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and proving all his discoveries by the customary usage of the Scriptures themselves.”
—(pp. 138, 139, ed. Spencer.)

Note C, p. 134.

I WAS perhaps too hasty in saying that nobody would defend the fantastical interpretations of scripture to be found in the early Christian writers; for experience shews that there is nothing too absurd or extravagant not to find defenders amongst those (and they are not a few) whose ingenuity is greater than their judgment, and their prejudices stronger than both.

The most odious of all methods upon which a zeal for antiquity has put these persons, is the attempt to identify whatever is improbable, contradictory or absurd, in those uninspired authors whom they hold in reverence, with certain real or supposed difficulties which the interpretation of the inspired writers appears to labour under; a method which the most malicious enemies of Christianity have often practised, and which its friends cannot adopt without (however unintentionally) betraying its cause. That God has, in his wisdom, left many stumbling-blocks in men's way in the revelation which he has been pleased to make, is indeed a mysterious but unquestionable truth; but is

there either sense or charity in magnifying their size and increasing their number, so as to make the strait gate still straiter, and the narrow way still narrower? That men should take satisfaction in explaining difficulties is natural, because God has so formed us that we are prompted to seek for explications and to be pleased when they are found; and that, considering our weakness, we should often go too far in this pursuit, is what might very well be expected. But that men should propose to themselves any advantage in multiplying the number of things inexplicable, and take a delight in making religion as mysterious—i.e. as inconceivable as possible, this appears to me to be the fruit neither of nature nor of grace.

However, I shall take occasion to add a few words with respect to the principle upon which this method of defending the ancient interpreters appears to proceed.

Minds of a certain class are apt to derive some comfort and encouragement towards believing those opinions which they have embraced out of a regard to authority, or from some other motive, from the consideration that, notwithstanding all that is said against them, they, nevertheless, may be true. Yet this is,

in reality, no more than may be said in behalf of almost any thing, however apparently absurd, that does not involve an absolute contradiction; and, conversely, it may be truly said of almost any thing, however probable, that it may be false. But the practical weight of this futile consideration ought plainly to be no greater in the one case than in the other. Still it is not uncommon to meet with those who suppose that their conduct in believing and maintaining even things manifestly ridiculous is sufficiently vindicated by shewing that the same, or something like the same objections, as are urged against these ridiculous opinions, have also been urged against things which, notwithstanding these difficulties, are allowed to be certainly true; as if they seriously supposed—what it is scarce credible that any one could seriously suppose—that no objections which can, in any conceivable combination of circumstances, be overborne by the weight of contrary positive evidence, ought in any case to be urged as valid against any thing—i.e. that no refutation which does not amount to a strict demonstration of the falsity of the thing refuted, is fitted to produce conviction in a reasonable mind.

Into both these fallacious processes, the de-

fenders of antiquity appear to have been led by mistaken notions of the arguments sometimes employed by the defenders of Christianity.

The external evidence of Christianity being supposed established, its opponents nevertheless contended that it contained such internal difficulties as rendered it incredible. To this the defenders of Christianity replied that, notwithstanding these difficulties, it nevertheless might be true, because natural religion (the truth of which the Deists allowed them to assume,) was plainly open to the same objections.

But in this argument the defenders of Christianity never dreamed of using such a plea as a direct proof, or of denying that internal difficulties were real objections to any scheme. Their course of reasoning supposed all along the force and weight of the external evidence established, and went thus far, and no farther,—that the difficulties complained of were plainly such as might be overborne by positive evidence.

Note D, p. 145.

THE resemblance between the mystical interpretations of the early ecclesiastical writers and those of Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, has been placed in a very clear light by Rosenmüller, in his *History of the Interpreters before Origen*, especially chap. ii. Photius had, long before, declared his opinion that the allegoric deluge (as he calls it) flowed into the church from the writings of Philo. (Bibl. cod. cv.)

With respect to the Pagan allegories, Eusebius (H. E. vi. 19.) has preserved a curious extract from Porphyry, in which he affirms that Origen borrowed his allegorical mode of interpretation from the Pythagoreans and Stoics. The philosophers of these sects, being really attached (as no other philosophers were) to the Pagan system of religion, endeavoured to render it reasonable, by resolving its mythology into physical and moral allegories. We have many specimens still remaining of their works, in support of this system, in the works of Sallust, the philosopher, Porphyry, Proclus and others. The Gnostic heretics also made

great use of this system, as we may see in Ireneus and in the fragments of Theodotus, given at the end of Clemens Alexandrinus, and those of Heracleon which Origen has preserved in his Homilies upon St. John. The orthodox writers argue against both the Pagans and heretics, with great spirit and cogency; without, apparently, perceiving that their arguments hold equally against themselves. 'How,' says Arnobius, 'can you be sure that when you open and expound these allegories, your interpretations are really consonant with the meaning which the frames of the narrative secretly attached to it, and not rather diverse in signification, though expressed under the same terms? You explain the commerce between Jove and Ceres, of the rain descending into the earth. Well! a second may invent another meaning, still more ingenious, and just as probable; a third may find another; a fourth, another still; and, according to the peculiar taste of each, each figure may meet with innumerable explanations. . . . But, to pass by this uncertainty, are we to suppose that these narratives are, always and throughout, to be explained by this allegoric reference? No, you say, but some parts are literal and some allegoric. This is a

pleasant invention, that every fool may see through. For, since it will by no means serve your purpose to resolve all into figures, you cull arbitrarily from the mass whatever happens to suit your whim. Yet, how can any one pretend to determine which part is merely allegoric and which literal? There is no mark in the style of the narratives themselves to distinguish their separate characters, or shew that one part has an abstruser meaning than another.' (Arnob. c. Gentes lib. v.)

In the fourth century, however, some of the best of the Greek writers, and especially the school of Theodorus, began to apply a sounder criticism to the scriptures, and, consequently, their commentaries—such as those of Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theodorus &c.—are very valuable helps to the understanding of the Bible.

Note E, p. 148.

My own opinion is that some of the Ante-Nicene writers held a real temporary generation of the Son of God; * i. e. a temporary *πρὸς βολή* from the substance of the Father, whereby a new person, or individual subsistence, was produced. The Son they seem to have considered as the immediate agent by [*διὰ*] whom the Father performs all works *ad extra*: but they did not regard him as an unintelligent agent, but as fully comprehending the whole plan or counsel which the Father had conceived and delineated within himself (and which was not different from his own mind) as the scheme and model of his operations. This wisdom, therefore, was at once in the Father and in the Son; as our meaning is at once in

* Qui λόγον incarnatum *ὁμοούσιον* quidem et *coæternum* Patri, non tamen ab æterno *ἀντὶ προσώπου* sive per se subsistentem, sed in Deo *ἐνδιδόθρον* fuisse docuerunt, donec eundem proferret Mundum per eum conditurus, illumque in Veteri Testamento Sæpius apparuisse inque Sanctis hominibus operatum, denique ex Maria Virgine natum fuisse hominem. Ita vix negari potest *sensisse* Tertullianum et alios quosdam. Ante-nicænos Patres Ecclesiæ. Fabricii Lux Salut. Evang. p. 147.

our words, and in our minds. So Dionysius Alexandrinus explains the matter. 'As,' says he, 'our mind utters from itself a discourse (λόγον) and each is different from the other, and each has its definite and proper place (for one is in the heart, but the other dwells and moves upon the tongue and mouth,) and yet they are not divided, nor are mutually deprived of each other; since neither is the mind without discourse, nor the discourse without meaning (ἄνους); but the mind makes the discourse by appearing in it, and the discourse exhibits the mind in which it was produced; so that the mind is, as it were, the discourse lying still, and the discourse the mind leaping forth, and the mind passes into the discourse, and the discourse infuses the mind into the hearers; and the mind is, so to speak, the Father of the discourse, and the discourse the Son of the mind so the Supreme Father, the universal mind, has his Son, the prime Logos, interpreter and messenger of himself.'" (Cap. Athan. de sent. Dionys. Epist.)

Bearing this illustration in mind, let us consider the words of Theophilus of Antioch.

"The God and Father of the universe is indeed immense, and never found in place (for

there is no place of his rest,) but his Word (λόγος,) by whom he made all things, being his power and wisdom, assuming* the person of the Father and Lord of all, came into Paradise in the person of God, and conversed with Adam. For the Scripture itself informs us that Adam said, I heard thy voice; and what is the voice of God but his word (λόγος,) who is also his Son: not as the poets and mythologists speak of sons of the gods, begotten of carnal commerce with women, but, as the truth expounds, the reason (λόγον) which was always interiorly lodged (ἐνδιέθετον) in the heart of God. For before anything was made he had this as his counsellor, being his own mind and wisdom; but when God willed to make such things as he had devised, he begat this reason (λόγον) into an exterior state of subsistence (προφορικῶν) the first born of every creature; not being him-


* ἀναλαμβάνων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κυρίου τῶν ὄλων. Waterland's exposition of these words is very singular. "Theophilus means this, and this only: that he *acted* [Theophilus says, *assumed*] in the character and capacity of the eternal God: which he might very well do, being himself *very God*." (Second Defence, p. 133.) Which is not only manifestly not the natural sense of the words, but even utterly inconsistent with Theophilus' meaning. For Theophilus here expressly denies that the Logos *acted in the capacity* of the Supreme, since the Supreme (as such) is *incapable* of appearing in a *finite place*.

self evacuated of his reason ($\tau\tilde{\epsilon}\nu \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\upsilon$,) but having begotten a word ($\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\upsilon$,) and always accompanied with that reason of his ($\tau\tilde{\epsilon}\lambda \lambda\omicron\gamma\tilde{\epsilon}$) whence the sacred Scriptures teach us,—in the beginning was the word ($\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$,) and the word was with God: shewing us that, at first, God was alone, and the word in him. Then it says,—All things were made by him, &c. The word, therefore, being both God, and born of God; [i. e. being at first identical with God as the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\tilde{\nu}\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$, and afterwards receiving a separate subsistence as $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \pi\rho\omicron\phi\omicron\rho\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$.] ‘Whenever the Father of all chooses he sends him into a certain place, and he, being sent by him, comes and is seen and heard, and is found in place.’” (Theoph. ad Ant. lib. ii. p. 100.)

Again,—‘God, then, having his own reason ($\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\epsilon\upsilon$) interiorly lodged ($\epsilon\tilde{\nu}\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$) within himself, begat it with his own wisdom, having uttered it before the universe.’ (Lib. ii. p. 88.)

Nor does Theophilus’ mode of speech, where he says that God took counsel with his reason, at all prove that he must have deemed the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\tilde{\nu}\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ a real person, before its prolation, as any one may see from such passages as Nehem. v. 7; Ps. xiv. 2; Eccles. xxxvii. 7—19 (in the Greek,) and very specially from these words of

Tertullian's,—‘ See when, in silence, you converse with yourself in reasoning whatever you think is discourse, whatever you perceive is reason. You must needs speak this in your mind ; and, whilst you speak, you have discourse speaking with you.’ (Conlocutorem adv. Prax : c. 5.) These words occur in an explanation which Tertullian attempts of this very subject, viz. the generation of the Son of God. It will be proper, therefore, to quote some parts of the context. ‘ Before all things God was alone ; being himself to himself, both world and place and every thing. Alone, I say, because he had nothing without him (*extrinsecus*) but himself. However, he was not even then alone [in every sense,] since he had with him that which he had in himself, that is to say, his reason. For God is a rational being, and reason was first in him ; and so all things are from him. Which reason is his perception. This the Greeks call *Logos*, a word which also means discourse (*sermo*.) So it happens that our people, through the rudeness of the translation, usually say that the word (*sermo*) was in the beginning with God, whereas it is much more proper to consider reason as the more ancient. Because God did



not speak from the beginning, though he was rational even before the beginning; and because speech (*sermo*) consisting in reason, shews that reason is prior, as being its substance. . . . This power, and this disposition of the divine consciousness (*sensus*,) is also declared in Scripture under the name of Wisdom. For what is wiser than the reason of God, and his discourse? Hear then how wisdom speaks of herself as the second person made. 'The Lord created me the beginning of his ways for his works;' 'before he made the earth, before the mountains were set in order, before all the hills, he begat me : ' that is, making and generating her in his own consciousness. After this observe her standing beside God by virtue of this very separation. 'When he prepared the heaven, I was present with him,' &c. For, when God first willed to produce into substance and species those things which he had disposed within himself with the reasoning and discourse of his wisdom, he first of all brought forth the word himself (*sermonem*) wisdom, having within him his reasonings inseparable from himself, that all things might be made by him, by whom they had been contemplated and disposed,—nay, and made too, so far as relates

to God's consciousness. . . . Then, therefore, the word receives his form and adornment, even the sound and the voice, when the Father says, Let there be light. This is the perfect nativity of the word when he proceeds from God: first made for contemplation under the name of wisdom; then produced for effect; from thenceforth making him his father, by proceeding from whom he was made son,' (C. Prax. c. v.) Again, in his work against Hermogenes, who maintained the eternity of matter. 'Let Hermogenes confess that the very wisdom of God is therefore said to have been generated and made, in order that we should believe nothing to be ungenerated or unmade but God himself. For if that which is in him and of him, was not within him, without beginning,—that is to say, his wisdom, which was from that time generated, and made from which it began to be revolved in the divine consciousness for arranging the plan of the work of the universe,—much less can anything that is without God be said to want a beginning. . . . So that if evil be ungenerated, but the Son generated, I know not how evil can be overcome of good,—the stronger by the weaker,' (c. xviii.)

And what makes it most manifest that Tertullian, in both these places, is speaking of a real, and not of a merely figurative generation, is that, immediately after the passage first quoted, he proceeds thus,—“ But it will be said to me, ‘ you grant that the word is a substance constructed by the Spirit and by the delivery of wisdom.’ I answer—yes.” For, since wisdom itself was made in time, and the substance of the Word was constructed by the delivery of this wisdom, it is most evident that the substance of the Word could not be constructed from all eternity.

It is also undeniably evident from the whole tenor of the next chapter, in which he sets himself to answer this objection, that his notion of generation is plainly the same as the Valentinian *πρεβολή*. Now there could be no shadow of foundation afforded for such a charge, if he had been only speaking of a figurative generation; or, if such a charge had been most unreasonably brought, either through mistake or misrepresentation, the natural answer which any one, who did not wish to perpetuate the mistake and sanction the misrepresentation, would give to it, would be to explain the figu-

rative character of the generation spoken of. Now this is the very thing which Tertullian does not do. He never drops the least hint that, when he spoke of generation, he meant only mission,—not the beginning of a hypostatical existence, but only of an œconomical character. On the contrary, the illustrations which he there uses are utterly inconsistent with the notion of a figurative generation. ‘God,’ says he, ‘produced the word as a root produces the plant, as a spring the stream, as the sun a ray!’ These are plainly substantial generations.

It is also most clearly evident, from the express words in which, previous to entering upon the whole disquisition, he describes the object of it. ‘I am to enquire concerning the Son of God, whether he is, and who he is, and how he is,’—words that plainly point to his real nature, not to his economical character. Besides, in the place against Hermogenes, the argument of Tertullian would have no shadow of pertinence, if he did not speak of a real generation of the Son.

Let us compare, with Tertullian, the language of Athenagoras.

‘I have already sufficiently proved that we are not atheists, who hold one God, self-existent, eternal, invisible, impassible, immense and incomprehensible, conceived only by mind and reason, and surrounded by light and beauty and spirit and power ineffable; by whom, through his word, the universe was made, and adorned, and is held together: for we recognize also a Son of God: nor let any one laugh at the notion of a Son of God; for we do not deem of God the Father, or of the Son, as the fabling poets, who represent their gods as no better than men. The Son of God is the mind and reason (λόγος) of the Father. But the Son of God is the reason of the Father, in idea and energy: for by him and through him were all things made; the Father and the Son being one, the Son being in the Father, and the Father in the Son, in unity and power of Spirit. The Son of God is the mind and reason of God. . . . The Son is the first offspring of the Father, not as if made, (γενόμενος)—for God, being the eternal mind, had from the beginning the reason in himself, inasmuch as he is eternally rational; but as coming out to be the idea and energy upon all material substances, which were in a chaotic state, and lay

(as it were) to be impregnated * by his efficacy. With which account accords the prophetic Spirit also,—‘ The Lord created me the beginning of his ways to his works.’ Though we allow that the prophetic Spirit also is an efflux from God, flowing forth and returning again like a ray of the sun.’ (Ath. leg. c. ix.)

Compare the latter words of this extract with the following passage from Justin Martyr :—

‘ I know that there are some who say that . . . this virtue is incapable of being separated or divided from the Father ; and that, in the same way as the light of the sun is upon earth, (though the sun is in heaven), and yet is inseparable from the sun ; and, when he sets, is taken away again with him, so the Father, when he wills, makes his virtue leap forth ; and, when he wills, draws it back again to himself.’—(Dial. p. 372.) And there will appear some reason for doubting whether Athenagoras allowed any permanent personal subsistence of the Holy

* *ὄχηλας δυνήν*. There is no authority for translating *ὄχηλας*, *vehicle*. The sense given above is, indeed, *gross* and *profane*, but it is the only sense which the Greek will bear. I read *καὶ τῆς ὄχηλας* instead of *καὶ γῆς*,.....which is nonsense. The Bishop of Lincoln has proposed an ingenious emendation of the whole passage ; but I think some meaning may be retrieved by this slighter change.

Spirit at least. But though, in the case of the Son, he may have allowed his egression in idea and energy to amount to a properly personal modification of the divine essence, yet I think it plain that he supposed this modification to take place in time. Nor is Bull's objection, that so the Son would be *γενόμενον*,—of any real force: for a customary sense of *γίνομαι* put absolutely, in christian writers, is to express *γένεσις* *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*; * and therefore that which was pro-

* So Ensebius says Plato called his Hypostases *ἀγενήτους*; and he adds that he applied the same term to every soul, *ἔπειτα ἐξ ἀπόρροίας τῆς τοῦ πρώτου διττοῦ συστήμας λέγων· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος αὐτὰς γεγονέναι βόουλεται.* (Præp. Ev. l. 13, c. 15.) Dr. Waterland has introduced a long disquisition concerning the words *ἀγενήτος* and *ἀγέννητος* in his second defence of the queries, pp. 255—262; in which, however, there seem to be several mistakes. His great object is to shew that wher-ever, in our present text, the early ecclesiastical authors speak of God as *ἀγέννητος* we should read *ἀγενήτος*—and for this purpose he argues strenuously for the late introduction of the former term. I take the truth to be this,—Plutarch, in his Platonic Questions (p. 1001,) has the following words:—*διαφέρει πατήρ τε ποιητοῦ, καὶ γεννήσεως ποιήσις· ὥς γὰρ τὸ γεγεννήμενον καὶ πεποιήται, οὐ μὴν, ἀναπαλιν, οὕτως ὁ γεννήσας καὶ πεποίηκεν· ἐμψυχον γὰρ γένεσις ἢ γέννησις ἐστι.* These words assure us that there can be no mistake in the MSS. of *γέννησις* for *γένεσις*. We may, therefore, proceed, *καὶ ποιητοῦ μὲν, οἷος οἰκοδόμος. . . . ἀπήλλακται τὸ γενόμενον ἔργον· ἢ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ γεννήσαντος ἀρχὴ καὶ δύναμις ἐγκέκραται τῷ τεκνωθέντι, καὶ συνέχει τὴν φύσιν ἀπόσπασμα καὶ μόριον οὖσαν τοῦ τεκνώσαντος.* This shews that *γέννητος* would be the proper word, where the

duced out of the divine substance, might truly, as to substance, be said to be ἀγέννητος or δι' γενόμενον: and, indeed, the explanatory sentence which

thing produced is of the same specific nature as the producing cause; and is, therefore, proper in the case of human descent, where the species is propagated. Accordingly we find the word ἀγέννητος used thrice by Sophocles—

ὅς οὐτε βλάστας παρ' γενεθλίου πατρὸς,
οὐ μητρὸς εἶχον, ἀλλ' ἀγέννητος τὸτ' ἦν."

Œd. Col. 972.

i. e. I had no parents.

Again, Trach. 63, in the tralatitious sense of ignoble, nullis ortus majoribus; and Frag. Alod. vii. In this same proper sense it seems to be used by Ignatius, when he says Christ was σαρκικός καὶ πνευματικός, γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος; which Tertullian has well rendered, hinc carneum, inde spirituale, hinc natum, inde non natum; using natum in the sense of corporeal generation. The gnostics, who imagined a series of æons generated by the Deity, so that each had μῦθον τι καὶ ἀπόσπασμα τῆς θεότητος—found γέννησις and its compounds very fit terms to express their notions. 'Αγέννητος is used by Theodotus (Epitome, p. 796;) and Agennetos is noticed as one of the names of Bythus by Tertullian, c. Valent, c. 35. In the Epistle of Ptolemæus, too, given by Grabe (Spic. ii. p. 79,) I think it is clear ἀγέννητος is the true reading; and so γεννητὸν is used by Heracleon, ibid. p. 115. 'Αγέννητος seems also to be used by Clemens Alexandrinus (Strom. vi. p. 644,) ἔν μὲν τὸ 'Αγέννητον ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός· ἔν δὲ καὶ προγεννηθὲν. Where the antithesis between ἀγέννητον and προγεννηθὲν strongly confirms the reading of the MSS. On the whole, it seems evident that the terms γεννητὸς and ἀγέννητος were used as early as the earliest of the ecclesiastical writers.

Let us now consider γεννητὸς and ἀγέννητος. Aristotle lays it down (Nat. Ausc. v. 2,) that γένεσις is either absolute or particular:—particular, when the change is only of some accidental

Athenagoras immediately adds by way of parenthesis, seems manifestly to shew that this was his meaning. 'The Son,' says he, 'was

quality; as from the absence of whiteness, to a white colour; absolute, when the change is *ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος εἰς ὄντιον*. ἀγέννητος, therefore he considers to denote, when applied to things existing, something which is incapable of non-existence; i. e. necessary existence, as to substance. So he held the world to be ἀγεννητόν, because it existed by an ἀναγκὴ κατὰ φύσιν, though his commentators suppose that he, nevertheless, held it to be an emanation from the first cause. To understand how this might be, we must consider that the peripatetics distinguished two kinds of necessity,—one produced by extrinsic compulsion (βίαϊα,) the other by internal constitution (κατὰ φύσιν,) see Aristotle, *Analyt. Post.* 11. xi; *Metaph.* v. 5, de part. Anim. i. 1. Now, according to Alexander Aphrod. ap. Euseb. *Præp. Ev.* p. 158,) τὰ φύσει γινόμενα are not produced by the will of a maker acting with design, but ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔχει τὴν ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τὰς αἰτίας τῆς τοιαύτης γενέσεως; which makes the φυσικὴ ἀναγκὴ much the same as the *intestinum necesse* of Lucretius, and shews the incorrectness of some of Waterland's statements, p. 299. In this way, then, though the universe might be considered as in some sense the result of the divine existence, yet as this result was founded on the same physical necessity as the divine existence itself was founded on, it might properly be called ἀγεννητόν, because, by its nature, it was incapable of non-existence at any point of time whatever. I find it impossible to frame any real distinction between this notion and that of self-existence. However the whole question—whether Aristotle believed the world to be, in any sense, a result—is very hard to settle. (See Mosheim's Note on Cudworth, c. iv. s. 24.) The latter Platonists, however, proceeded on very different principles. (Stillingfl. *Orig. Sacrae.* p. 437.) In their subtle analysis, existence itself was held to be posterior in order of conception to unity, and therefore was said

not made; for God, being an eternal mind, and eternally rational, had himself in himself his reason from the beginning.' The wisdom

to result from the will of the $\tau\theta\epsilon\varsigma$. All necessity they received into the decree of the Supreme, moved by moral motives, (Jam. xl. Myra. sect. i. 14;) and hence they removed necessity from him, as implying the constraint of some other will. (Plotin. Ennead. vi. p. 748.) Hence, when they said that the Deity acted by nature, they meant that his will was determined by his essential goodness, and was not, as in the case of men and finite beings, arbitrary: as any one may see from such passages as Procli Theol. pp. 40, 41. 90. 142. Hence, by $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ they denoted that which had a permanent invariable ground of existence in the goodness of the divine nature; and this they affirmed to be predicable of all spiritual substance (vide Procl. p. 66,) but they acknowledged that Plato sometimes spoke of souls as $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota$: where, says Proclus, $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ is taken figuratively, and that which is really only an order of emanation is expressed in terms borrowed from the order of time (p. 68.) One sees in this, as well as in many other cases, that when the system of these strange men is understood, their words are often found to bear a very different sense from what we should, at first, suspect. It appears also that the passage from Basil's Hexameron, quoted by Waterland, p. 258, is by him very erroneously applied to the Platonists, whereas it really refers to the Peripatetics; and that Clarke was quite right in saying that the Platonists held the universe to be a voluntary, though eternal, emanation from the Allwise and Supreme cause. (Demonst. p. 31.) But I see no reason to believe that Plato himself, or any one else besides these late and fantastic writers, used the term $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in this sense, or meant anything else by it than a substance necessarily existing. Now it by no means follows that because a thing is not $\gamma\epsilon\gamma\eta\gamma\epsilon\iota$, i.e. produced in time, or $\alpha\pi\epsilon\kappa\alpha\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, therefore it is $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\sigma\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ in the absolute sense, or, in its nature, incapable of non-existence; because a

assuming a personal form, therefore, in order to its manifestation or energy, was considered by Athenagoras as only a modification of its

thing might, by the free-will of the Supreme, and not by any physical necessity, be generated eternally. So Philo tells us that the Logos is neither ἀγένητος ὡς ὁ θεὸς nor yet γενητὸς ὡς ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ μέσος τῶν ἁκρῶν, ἀμφοτέροις ὁμηρέων. (Quis rer. Div. Hæres, p. 398.) Words very nearly resembling, as the reader may recollect, the expressions of Alexander of Alexandria, already quoted. So also, a personal modification of the divine substance, produced by the free-will of the Supreme, might be γενητὸς in respect of his mode of existence, and ἀγένητος with respect to his substance itself.

But, though the ecclesiastical writers (I think) generally use the term γενητὸς to denote that which was made out of nothing, and in time, yet they certainly sometimes employ it to denote that which is produced, and not necessarily existent. So Origen, Com. in Johan, p. 56, tells us that, though he allows three hypostases, he recognizes ἀγένητον μηδὲν ἕτερον τοῦ πατρὸς, and therefore thinks the Holy Spirit is included in the all things which were made (ἐγένετο) by the Son. This reasoning seems to admit no medium between γενητὸς and ἀγένητος: yet Origen certainly held the eternal generation of the Son. But, as he also held the eternal production of matter, he was obliged to use γενητὸς in this large sense. We have in Photius (A.D. 235) extracts out of a dialogue περὶ τῶν γενητῶν, by Methodius; in which, he undertakes to refute this latter opinion of Origen's, and argues strenuously that whatever has a cause, must be posterior in time to its producer, and that whatever is eternal (or rather sempiternal) must be [ἀγένητον] self-existent, see especially p. 937. I think Methodius represents very well the general sense of the early ecclesiastical writers.

Let me now add a few words with respect to φυσικὴ ἀναγκή. Waterland lays it down that this phrase always implies such a

subsistence, not the production of a new being : and that this is the sense in which Athenagoras

necessity as not only acts independently of the will, but against it. Such a necessity as lays a restraint or burthen upon the will. (p. 304.) This statement, I conceive, to be very incorrect. Clemens Alexandrinus, arguing against those heretics who maintained that men were necessarily determined to believe, or disbelieve, speaks thus :—*οὐκετ' οὖν προαίρεσις κατόρθωμα ἢ πίστις, δι' φυσίως πλεονεκτεῖν μα. . . . προηγουμένην ἔχουσα τῆς ἐκ τοῦ τὰ πάντα δυνατοῦ φυσικῆς ἀναγκῆς γινομένην*. Str. ii. p. 363. Yet Clemens could not mean that Basilides pretended that the elect believed against their will, but only without any causal exertion of free will.

So Bardesanes, (quoted by Euseb. Præp. Evang. p. 161,) τὰ μὲν ἅλλα ζῶα κατὰ τὴν κοινότητα, καὶ τὴν διαφορὰν κατὰ φύσιν δοθεῖσαν ἐκάστω, ἐξ ἀνάγκης ΗΔΕΩΣ φέρεται ἄνθρωποι δὲ μόνον τὸ ἐξαιρετικὸν ἔχοντες, τὸν τε νόον καὶ τὸν ἐκ τούτου προφερόμενον λόγον, κατὰ μὲν τὴν κοινότητα ἔπονται τῇ φύσει. . . . κατὰ δὲ τὸ ἐξαιρετικόν, οὐ κατὰ φύσιν πολιτεύονται. Where it is evident that Bardesanes does not mean to say that, in what men or other animals do by necessity of nature, they always act against their wills. This is yet more evident from an expression he uses afterwards, p. 163, *ἐκαστος. . . . ΔΟΥΛΕΥΕΤΑΙ τῇ φύσει. . . . πῇ μὲν ὡς βούλεται, πῇ δὲ ὡς μὴ βούλεται*. Whence it appears that the strong expressions of the ancient writers, such as *slavery, force, compulsion*, do by no means necessarily imply a repugnance of the will, but only an independence upon it. Nay, a passage which Waterland himself has cited from Gregory Nyssen seems decisive against him, *ὁ δὲ ἀνάγκη φυσίως ὑπεξυμμένος ἐνεργεῖ διὰ παντὸς, μᾶλλον δὲ πάσχει τὴν ὑπακοὴν οὐδὲ, Εἰ μὴ βούλοιτο τούτο ποιεῖν, συγχωρούσης τῆς φύσεως*. The nature, says Gregory, would not let him be idle, even if he were to choose to suspend the operation.

Waterland is, I think, also mistaken in supposing that *φύσει* and *κατὰ φύσιν* denote necessary existence in that abstract metaphysi-

uses the term *γένομενον* is further manifest from the whole tenor of xvth chapter of this same book. It will be worth-while to compare also the words of Hippolytus in his treatise against Noetus:—

‘God existing *ALONE*, and having nothing co-eval with himself, willed to create the world. By the contemplation of his mind, and an effort of his will, and an utterance of his voice, he made the world; and that which was made was immediately present with him as he willed. . . . Yet even whilst he was alone he was many-fold; (*πολὺς*) for he was not without reason (*ἄλογος*), nor without wisdom, nor without power, nor without counsel; but all things were in him, and he himself was all. When he willed, and as he willed in his own appointed times, he exhibited his word, (*λόγον*) by which he made all things; for all things that were made he fashioned by the word and wisdom, creating by

cal sense, in which it is proper to the deity, (p. 265). In the fragment of the Pseudo Justin which he there quotes, we have not only the words which he has cited—*ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ζῶη*—but these phrases also, *κατὰ φύσιν φθορᾶς*. . . . and *φυσικὴν φθορὰν*. Irenæus also, speaking of the human soul, ranks it amongst those things, “*quæ sunt naturâ immortalia: quibus a suâ naturâ adest vivere.*” Lib. v. c. 40. Athanasius says the human body is *φυσικὴ θνητὸν*. Orat. c. Gent.

the word, and adorning by wisdom. He made them then as he willed, for he was God. But he begat the Word to be the Prince, and Counsellor, and Artificer of the things that are made; which Word, being before invisible within himself, he made visible to the created world; and uttering his first voice, and begetting light of light, he brought forth a Lord to the creation; and his own mind, which was before visible to himself alone, and not to the world, he caused to become visible to the world also, that, by its manifestation the world might see and be saved: and so another person was present with him. (*ἕτερος παρίστατο.*) When I say another, I do not mean to say that there were two Gods, but as light from light, and water from a spring, or a ray from the sun. For he is one virtue from the whole; the Father is the whole, of which the Son is a virtue.'

That Hippolytus is here speaking of a real production is (I think) as manifest as almost any words (not scholastically guarded) can make it. Nor can I see how, if he had meant a real production, he could reasonably be expected to have expressed himself more clearly. The generation which he speaks of is one, by means of which another person became present with

God, who had been till then alone; and it is compared to the substantial generations of one light from another,—of a stream from the fountain—of a ray from the sun. Nor can any thing be weaker than the objections which Bull urges against this natural and obvious exposition of Hippolytus. Hippolytus, says he, is, by his own confession, not speaking of the substantial production, but only of the manifestation of the Logos; for he says that, by this generation, God made him visible. But this is assuming that a real generation would not be a manifestation; whereas I conceive that Hippolytus plainly means directly the reverse.

Nor is Bull's other objection in any degree more cogent. Hippolytus, says he, owns that though God was (in one sense) alone, he was (in another sense) many; which supposes a plurality of persons in the unity of essence.

But, in the first place, this would prove too much. For he whom Hippolytus affirms to have been alone, was (not the whole Trinity, but) the person of the Father; since it was he, who was alone, that generated the Son. This exposition, therefore, would imply that God the Father subsisted in a plurality of persons.

Secondly, Hippolytus himself expressly ex-

plains how God was many—i.e. because all things were [potentially] in him, since their causes were in him—i.e. the wisdom to conceive and the power to create them, which, as we have seen, is precisely the same account as Tertullian also has given of this matter. So also Tatian: ‘God was in the beginning; but, by the beginning, we understand the power of the word. For the Lord of the universe, being himself the substance of all things, was alone, indeed, in respect of the creation which had not as yet taken place; but forasmuch as, being all powerful, he was the substance of all things visible and invisible, all things were with him. For with him, by reason of his rational (λογικῆς) power, the word (λόγος) which was in him, subsisted also. Then, by the will of his simplicity, the word leaps forth; and the word, not going forth into vacuity, (or unsubstantially, κατὰ κενόν,) becomes the first-born work of his breath. Him we recognize as the beginning of the world. But he was produced by participation, (μερισμὸν) not by abscission. For that which is cut off is severed from the first, but that which participates . . . does not lessen that out of which it was taken. As from one torch many fires are kindled, and yet the light of the

first torch is not diminished by their kindling, so the word also, going forth from the power of the Father, does not make him that begat him void of reason (*ἄλογον*).’ (Cohort. p. 145.)

If Tatian had meant by the *προέλευσις* of the Logos, nothing more than a mere mission, he would have had no reason for guarding so carefully against the notion that by it the Father’s substance might be lessened, or his perfections impaired.

It is to be observed, also, that Hippolytus gives this very reason why the mode of the procession of the Logos is inscrutable, that God, by his will, begat him as willed. (*βουλήθεις ἐγέννησεν ὡς ἠθέλησεν*.) Now it could not have been the manner of a mere mission that Noetus demanded to have explained; because, supposing the Logos to be a real person, there could be no difficulty about that; but what Noetus might very well have demanded an explanation of, and what, it is most manifest, was the great difficulty proposed by all the Sabellian teachers, was this—how the Logos could be conceived to be generated into a real person, without making him a mere creature on the one side, or another independent deity on the other, or without supposing that the

Father's substance was divisible? Hippolytus would have been a very weak and dishonest reasoner, if, instead of this real question, he had taken advantage of the ambiguity of a term to shuffle in another question, wholly impertinent to the dispute between him and Noetus.

I think it is most evident that Tatian's master, Justin, speaks also of a real generation :— 'I will bring testimony,' says he, 'from the scriptures, that in the beginning, before all the creatures, God begat a certain rational power from himself, which is called the glory of the Lord by the Holy Spirit, and sometimes a Son—sometimes Wisdom—sometimes an Angel—sometimes God, and sometimes Lord and Word ; at other times, he calls himself a General, appearing in the form of a man to Joshua : for he is entitled to all these appellations, both by reason of his serving the Father's will, and from his having been begotten by the volition of the Father. Nay, do we not see the like happen in our own case? For when we emit a word (λόγον) we beget a word, yet we emit it not by abscission, so as to diminish the reason (λόγον) which is within us ; just as we see, in the case of fire, a second fire produced, without any diminution of that from which it was kin-

dled. . . . This progeny first really (τῷ ὅντι) emitted from the Father, was with the Father, before all creatures.' (Dial. p. 183, 187.) And again—'I have already shewn that this virtue is not merely nominally counted distinct, as the ray from the sun, but is a really numerical distinct subsistence, and have said that he was begotten from the Father by his power and will; yet not by abscission, as if the Father's substance were divided.' (p. 373.)

I confess myself at a loss to conceive how it could be expected that Justin should have more clearly indicated a real generation, if he had meant to speak of such a thing. The only reason why the term generation could ever be supposed to indicate a community of nature, is because, in its proper sense, it denotes an act by which one specific nature is propagated; but, if generation be taken, in a mere figurative sense, for mission, the ground of this argument will be wholly cut away from under it. Justin, be it observed, is speaking to a Jew, who could not possibly know, without being told, that the Christians used the term generation in a peculiar figurative sense, but who might very well be acquainted with its sense in Philo and the Platonists; so that, unless Justin was weak and

dishonest enough to put a deliberate imposition upon him, he must be supposed to have abstained from such unusual terms as had a technical sense peculiar to the Christian theology: otherwise, any one who heard him speak of γενήματα and προβολαι, could not possibly avoid being led to receive these terms in the common philosophic acceptation.

The same remark applies forcibly to the large and repeated statements which the early writers are confessed to make of the inferiority of the Son to the Father,—to their speaking of the Son uniformly as acting in subordination to the Father, and in obedience to his commands, and attributing to the Son without scruple that which they affirm it to be indecorous or even blasphemous, to attribute to the Father. All these phenomena, Bull and Waterland endeavour to solve by an arbitrary hypothesis, made at will, of a voluntary œconomy or agreement between the divine persons; in virtue of which the Son, though being and continuing absolutely equal in all respects with the Father, covenanted to act as if he were inferior to the Father. Of such a mere voluntary compact, however, the ancient writers themselves do not say one syllable, nor is it conceivable that they

should have thought the hypothesis so natural and obvious as, of itself, immediately to occur to the Catechumens, Jews, and Pagans, for whom they wrote ; so that we must either conclude that they really and honestly meant what their words appear to mean, or that they designedly misrepresented their own faith, and put a formal and deliberate fraud upon their readers. For instance, when Theophilus, writing to a Pagan, tells him that it is inconceivable that the supreme God—the God of the universe—should exist in place, or be visible—it is hard to believe that he could have expected his Pagan reader to construe this with reference to a voluntary œconomy between the persons of the Father and the Son, and conclude (contrary to the obvious sense of the words) that he who did all this (which is said to be inconceivable of the God of the universe) was himself, in as full and high a sense, the supreme God—the God of the universe—as that other person of whom such actions were said to be inconceivable.

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